

Insight *Journal*

Spring 2003

Teacher Interview:

Gloria Taraniya Ambrosia

The Truth of Interpersonal Suffering

Greg Kramer

The Five Spiritual Powers

Sarah Doering

King Ashoka Speaks

A Radiance of Nuns

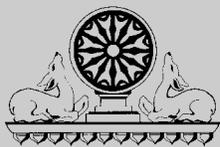
Sudhammā Bhikkhunī

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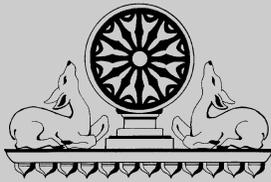


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What is Insight?

Insight involves an intuition of mind and heart that takes us beyond knowledge toward wisdom. It has to do with deeply understanding the nature of things, rather than knowing a lot about them.

Not everyone is interested in insight. The truths revealed can be unsettling, and require higher levels of conscious awareness to be intentionally cultivated over time.

This journal is dedicated to an investigation of the insights that uncover basic truths about our world, ourselves and our fellow beings. It is inspired by the Buddhist tradition, which above all is a system of thought and practice centering on the wisdom that sets us free from suffering.

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Evolving Beyond Delusion

The human species is evolving, and at a very rapid rate now that the evolution is cultural rather than biological. Physical changes may still occur; but at such a glacial pace we are unlikely to notice anything. Changes in the human mind, however, are dramatic and can be seen all around us.

The twin forces of *greed* and *hatred*—the primal urge to want more of what pleases us and to want what displeases us to go away—have been useful adaptive tools throughout our primitive past, but are rapidly becoming obsolete. Now that our communities are global rather than tribal, our tools are powerful rather than rudimentary, and our weapons are capable of massive destruction, we find ourselves in the position of needing to evolve beyond the old paradigms if we are to adapt to the new environment shaped increasingly by our own activities.

The deeply-rooted instincts of desire have helped us get to where we are, as they continue to help all animals survive in the wild. Greed is necessary to chase down and devour one's prey, and hatred is essential to the "fight or flight" reflex that helps keep a creature alive in moments of danger. But humans no longer live in small family units in a vast and unfriendly wilderness. Huddled together as we now are, shoulder to shoulder on a shrinking planet, our own animal instincts have become our most dangerous predator.

For whatever reason it happened, the sudden bulging of the forebrain in *homo sapiens* (which took place not very long ago) gave us humans an unprecedented capability: sustained conscious awareness of what we are doing and how it effects those around us. The Buddhists call this capacity mindfulness (*sati*) and clear comprehension (*sampajāna*). It has allowed us to commence the process of evolving beyond the third deeply-rooted instinct, *delusion*, by beginning to develop wisdom.

What is more essentially human than the capacity for wisdom? Wisdom allows us to see beyond appearances into the hidden nature of things; it enables us to perceive what is counter-intuitive; it helps us know what is essential. Wisdom gives us an ability to understand that our greatest happiness and most profound well-being lies beyond the quenching of immediate thirsts or the suppression of unpleasant truths. In particular, wisdom reveals the limitations of our in-born desires of greed and hatred, as it erodes the delusion that holds us in their grip.

The Buddhist tradition can be tremendously helpful to us in the process of trying to evolve to the next level of humanity. The Buddha himself can be viewed as demonstrating what this new species "*homo sapiens*" (wise humans) might look like. For forty-five years, between the awakening of his mind and the passing away of his body, the Buddha lived with body and mind purified of all states rooted in greed, hatred and delusion. These three fires had "gone out," had "been extinguished," or had "been released from their fuel," and this is what the word *nirvana* refers to. It describes not a transcendent realm, but a transformed—we might even say evolved—human being.

The goal of becoming a better person is within the grasp of all of us, at every moment. The tool for emerging from the primitive yoke of conditioned responses to the tangible freedom of the conscious life lies just behind our brow. We need only invoke the power of mindful awareness in any action of body, speech or mind to elevate that action from the unconscious reflex of a trained creature to the awakened choice of a human being who is guided to a higher life by wisdom.

We do not have to accomplish this in as dramatic a way as the Buddha did. We may not "complete" the work in this lifetime and root out the very mechanism by which our minds and bodies manifest their hereditary toxins. Yet to whatever extent we can notice them as they arise, understand them for what they are, and gently abandon our grasp of them—if for only this moment—we are gaining ground in the grand scheme of things. And even a modest moment of emancipation from the unwholesome roots of greed, hatred and delusion is a moment without suffering.

Despite the sometimes overwhelming evidence to the contrary, I believe an objective study of history will show that the human species is indeed evolving towards a wiser, kinder and more noble future. The Buddha and his teachings have had a lot to do with raising the sights of humanity, and we may well be in a position today where these teachings can contribute to a new awakening of human potential.

There is something beautiful in us, eager to unfold. Organic, like a plant, it need only be cleared of choking weeds, watered by kindness and generosity, and turned to the bright, nurturing rays of wisdom. Mindfulness is the way we can care for this hope; let's claim our freedom and see what we might become.

--Andrew Olendzki

A Builder of Bridges

An Interview With
Gloria Taraniya Ambrosia



I can't imagine a life as a Buddhist that is not in relationship with a monastic community. I guess I'm traditional that way.

I know it is an obvious question, Taraniya, but how did you get into all this?

As far back as I can remember, I was interested in what we now call the spiritual path. It took many forms in my early years, but I can tell you what led to my interest in Buddhism and how I first got exposed to it.

Throughout my twenties and early thirties I had been interested in facilitating change through political, social and economic systems. I wanted to work in fields that served people in a positive way. In my early thirties I even went back to school for a Master's degree in Public Administration and soon thereafter went to work for the Governor's science advisor in North Carolina. I had always been interested in science and technology, and this position offered a natural blend of science and public policy. Through this office and another agency, which was a spin-off of our office, I worked to promote biotechnology as a new technology for North Carolina.

At first these new technologies seemed to fit nicely with my wish to improve human life; they offered hope for providing food for the hungry,

medicine for the sick, and other good things. But for me, something was off the mark. I began to realize that my heart wasn't satisfied working at political and economic levels. I wanted, even needed, more distinctly heart-based approaches to addressing human suffering. Coming to this kind of clarity didn't happen overnight. I went through a period of frustration and discouragement. My chosen occupation did not fit my idealism, and I needed that kind of fit. Yet it took me time to sort out what was "off."

At this time I started doing yoga as a way to calm myself and deal with the conflict I was having about work. I eventually got quite skilled at yoga, holding the postures longer and longer—particularly the lotus posture. At one point I thought, "I think I'm meditating! Maybe I should get some meditation instruction." I asked my yoga teacher for guidance and he directed me to a weekend retreat on insight meditation. The retreat was taking place within a month and very near my home, so I went.

Well, talk about coming home! I was so happy, I cried half the weekend. When I did walking meditation for the

first time, I was ecstatic. I know this sounds dramatic, but it was that powerful for me.

What was it about the experience that you found so compelling?

When I took my first mindful step in walking practice, I realized that I had never really been aware of a single step I had ever taken. The meditation instruction was so simple: "Breathe, and know that you are breathing. Walk, and know that you are walking." And in ways that are difficult to articulate, I just had a sense of something being put right that had been terribly off the mark. I found the Buddha's teachings to be beautiful! They addressed the means for cultivating presence of mind, as well as loving, kind, and generous states of mind. I felt as though the whole experience was calling me to live more fully, and to adopt a life for which at some level my heart had been yearning.

And did meditation practice affect your yoga in any way?

I realized that, despite the fact that yoga is clearly a spiritual practice, I had been using it much as one might use aerobic exercise to either expend bottled-up energy or offset stress. I wasn't really connecting with it in a

spiritual way. With the mindfulness practice, I took that leap. With it I was learning to use my observing capacity to see into the things that seemed to be creating the distress in my life, and to try to understand them rather than to simply relax around them.

I realized I had never really been aware of a single step I had ever taken.

What happened next?

My life took a sharp turn. That first retreat was in April of 1986. I spent the following summer doing every retreat that time off from my job would allow. In October I quit my job, broke off a relationship, sold most of my possessions, and moved to Southern Dharma, a retreat center in the mountains of North Carolina. My idea was to fully immerse myself in the practice rather than just go on retreats. I worked as the manager of that center for nearly a year.

But I soon learned that, while the retreat center did an excellent job hosting retreats, it offered no guidelines for resident staff on how to live together as a form of practice. And we, the staff, were left to try to work that out for ourselves. There was no resident teacher, and no specific forms to guide us. We ended up fumbling and grumbling terribly.

I thought my time could be better spent doing intensive solitary practice, so I went to IMS. I extended my first three-month retreat into long-term practice, staying on as a “long-term yogi” for the better part of two years. For most of that time I lived in a brick room in the basement affectionately called “the cave.” Just outside my door was the old bowling alley, which became my own private walking lane. In order to keep the container of my practice very tight, that is, to secure the mindfulness and the concentration, I didn’t move around the building much at all. I just focused my practice on

“lifting, moving, placing” and “breathing in and breathing out” in a very focused way.

What was that like to do so much continuous practice? Many people would just boggle at that.

I know. Even now I look back and ask, “How did I do that?” I had tremendous determination. One of the staff members at the time used to call me “Hardcore.” I’ve always been a willful person—not always skillfully so! But here that willfulness was an advantage because it made it possible for me to sustain this kind of practice for a long time. I can honestly say that I was rarely lax in applying myself, and really used the structure of retreat to facilitate insight.

It wasn’t all fun and games. At times I found myself writhing around on the floor in pain over some mental torment, some condition of my life or mental pattern from which I couldn’t free myself, or the memory of harm I had done or that had been done to me. It was as if I was opening to all the undigested food of my emotional life.

I was opening to all the undigested food of my emotional life.

But of course there were blissful moments as well. When one is focused in this way over long periods of time, one can’t help but stumble into the *jānas* [meditative absorptions] and enjoy some of that kind of pleasure. And there were very powerful moments of seeing into the truth. For example, one time when I was doing walking meditation on the concrete wall of what used to be the sunken swimming pool at IMS, I saw very directly that a future-oriented thought I was thinking was actually just a thought in the present moment. “It’s just a thought!” I exclaimed internally. “There is no future! The future has no ultimate reality!”

Breaking out of that kind of view of the world has a very powerful effect. It

weakens the pull of tomorrow, the habit of what Buddha called “becoming.” Over the many months of practice one begins to experience all aspects of the body and mind—sensations, feelings and thoughts—with greater and greater impartiality. This brings about gradual but radical adjustments to one’s self-definition.

[Meditation] brings about gradual but radical adjustments to one’s self-definition.

I began, through those months and years of practice, to get some semblance of detachment from this whole thing that, up until that point, I had known as “me.” I was forging a completely different relationship with it. The lure of both pleasure and pain was beginning to weaken; I was whittling away at coarse levels of defilement; and I was deepening in the understanding that comes with practice.

Every three months or so I would stop practicing in this way and go out into the world for a few days or a week, just to get a reality check. I learned a lot from coming and going like this. I could see first-hand how incredibly stimulating the world is, how alluring and yet painful that stimulation can be, and what it feels like to be ensnared by it. I could see, for example, the ill effects of less than loving speech. When you first come out of retreat and start speaking, anything that is even remotely coarse feels like black gunk coming out of your mouth. And one time when a store clerk spoke harshly to me, I broke out in tears! I could see that I was getting a lot more sensitized to the things we do that hurt each other.

So where do you go after practicing like that?

The seed for what came next actually occurred during my long-term practice at IMS. Except for the occasional Dhamma talks at night, I rarely participated in the retreats that were

coming and going in the halls above me. I found that the state of my own mind was very still and it was disturbing to move about with meditators who were coming from more frantic situations. But then along came a retreat led by two monks from the Amaravati community in England, Ajahn Sucitto and Ajahn Karuniko. Somehow I felt compelled to participate.

I'll never forget my experience when I saw these two monks walk into the hall that first night. There was an incredible welling up from deep within me. My body wanted to move into the bowing posture and my hands went into *anjali*. I assumed respectful poses. I remember that I was very moved by their chanting and I could hardly wait for certain lines in the chanting that particularly thrilled me. It all felt very good to me.

As the week progressed it was obvious to me that there was something very different about these people. More than the way they communicated the teachings—which was very heartfelt, drawing from their own practice and direct experience—I got a sense that they were embodying the Buddhist teachings in a way that I had not seen before. They lived an incredibly renunciant lifestyle and yet they were so happy! Being a so-called greedy type, I had to adjust my thinking in order to wrap my mind around that.

In some small way I felt I was experiencing what the fourth heavenly messenger, an ascetic, must have been for the Buddha. [The first three messengers were a sick person, an aged person, and a corpse.] The monks inspired me. I came away from the retreat with a sense that the fruits of this practice are possible. I loved the feeling of that. I hung on every moment of that retreat and wept when they left.

But before they left I asked Ajahn Sucitto if there was a place for a woman at the monastery, and he said, “By all means, come and visit when you have finished lifting, moving and placing.”

It took more than a year before I

finally went to Amaravati [in England]. The first time I went I stayed for six months. Since then, I have visited one or another of the monasteries in that tradition [the lineage of Ajahn Chah] nearly every year, usually staying a month to three months.

It was obvious to me there was something very different about these people.

What is it that you find so compelling about the practice environment at the monastery?

Well, first let me address some aspects of the form. When you go to the monastery as a layperson, you have to agree to live by established standards and guidelines. For laypeople this involves living by the eight precepts [the five precepts (including celibacy) plus not eating after noon, not listening to music or going to shows, not adorning yourself with perfumes or jewelry]. For someone like me who grew up in a house full of women who loved to eat and dance and get dolled up, that was a big step! For my first trip to the monastery I packed a huge suitcase. I thought I would need a lot of outfits! But one soon learns how little we really need. The joys of renunciation may be hard-won at first, but soon one finds oneself delighting in simplicity and being content with little.

One begins to understand what true spiritual friendship is all about.

Then there were the devotional practices each morning and evening. This was new for me and I was surprised to discover that I had a lot of devotional energy. Being at the monastery and taking part in daily *puja* [meditation and chanting] provided a structured outlet for a storehouse of

devotional energy that I realized I had been suppressing. Looking back, I think I needed a form to express my inspiration.

But for me the most compelling aspect of practicing at the monastery was living in community and how this both revealed places where I needed to grow and pulled forth and accented my natural goodness. Doing solitary practice was great, but when I had to interact with human beings again, I could see that I still had a lot of rough edges! Monastic life provided an active and yet very safe and supportive environment to become aware of these edges and work through them.

I remember trying to engage a novice monk in unskillful speech—you know, having a less-than-kind opinion about somebody and wanting to get a nasty conversation going. His skillful reluctance to pick that up, his non-participation in the harm I was attempting to generate, was very noticeable to me. I was left standing there with this crud all over me.

The beautiful thing about this exchange was that I didn't get the sense of being reprimanded or criticized or judged for my unskillful behavior. I actually had the sense that the novice monk was standing back from it, allowing it, so that it could move through. I've experienced this kind of support over and over again at the monastery—particularly with the nuns with whom I live when I am there. One begins to understand what true spiritual friendship is all about. With this kind of skillful support, your heart, your actions and speech just start to incline towards the good.

I also find the pace of activity at the monastery to be very supportive and utterly sensible. What drives the pace with which projects get done is the degree to which one can be mindful within them. It's not that there aren't times when we have to push to beat the clock or that the pace is so relaxed that we are just lolling about. It's just that the need to get things done is kept in the proper perspective. There is not a

hurried feeling; one isn't racing through an activity or from one project to another. Daily life is not obsessed or driven. I found that I was automatically taking a lot more care with things because there was more spaciousness around activity. And I could see by contrast when I left the monastery how frenzied my life could be. Over the years I have found that I do less, and am much happier because of that. There is a greater spaciousness in my life that comes from giving more care to what I am doing.

Have you ever found yourself inclined to be ordained as a nun?

When I first went to the monastery, that was in the back of my mind. But I wasn't moved to do it. And I noticed over the next few years and several trips to the monastery, I still did not request the "going forth." I have to admit that this was a puzzle to me. Clearly, I was drawn to monastic life. But it didn't seem to be happening for me.

I labored over the question for ten years—all the while comparing myself with the nuns and monks, and coming up short. For many years I thought lay life was what was left over after I couldn't make the decision to be a nun. But several years ago something happened to snap me out of this comparing mode.

Over the years I had experienced tremendous gratitude towards the nuns and monks in this lineage in general, and towards two individuals in particular, [the monk] Ajahn Sucitto and [the nun] Ajahn Siripaṇṇā. For many years they had been my primary teachers. I wanted to offer them a special gift. The thing that made the most sense to me was to arrange for each of these individuals to have an extended individual retreat away from the demands of running monasteries, away from all their responsibilities, and which I would support. As abbots of monasteries, they were constantly serving the wider community, and it was actually quite rare that they would get an opportunity to do a sustained, solitary meditation retreat.

Ajahn Siripaṇṇā left the monastic life before she could accept my offer, but in the winter of 2000 I was able to support a six-week retreat for Ajahn Sucitto. I had arranged for him to have a solitary retreat in one of the forest cabins at the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies, and made a commitment to ensure that his basic needs and requisites were provided every day for the six-weeks.

During this period of such direct service to the Sangha, I experienced a dramatic shift in my attitude. The strength of my respect, devotion and generosity helped me see more clearly how I had actually been relating to the monastics for all those years: I loved supporting them. And once I stopped measuring my life against theirs, I could see that I was actually incredibly happy being a lay supporter. I had not seen that very clearly before.

Since the time of that offering to Ajahn Sucitto, I have investigated the Buddha's teachings on lay life much more closely and am endeavoring to learn about and to live the Buddhist life as a layperson more fully. This makes me very happy.

But your life as a layperson still centers on the monastic Sangha?

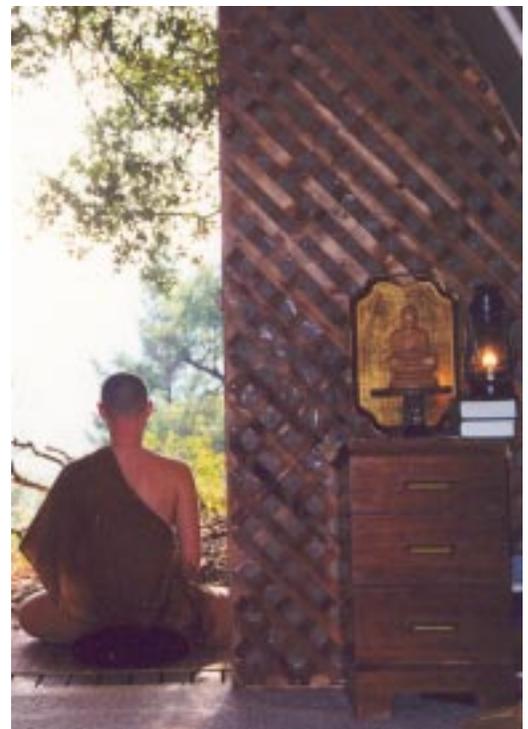
Yes, I am definitely holding it in that traditional way. I can't imagine a life as a non-monastic Buddhist, that is, not in relationship with a monastic community. That is the way the Buddha set it up—the fourfold assembly, that is, lay and monastic, females and males. And it is clear to me that this relationship is pivotal. Lay Buddhism without the monastics feels rudderless to me and I can't imagine that it could endure; and monastic Buddhism without the laity feels cold and isolated and surely would not survive. Monastics preserve the tradition by embodying it. Their lives, their example, draw out a certain goodness in each other and in the lay community that supports them.

Do you think that monasticism needs to be more firmly rooted in the West for Buddhism to blossom?

I can't imagine Buddhism surviving in the West without a strongly rooted monastic base. And this would necessitate a strong lay/monastic relationship. Based upon what I have seen over the years, I think the forecast for this relationship is promising. People have become more and more interested in monasticism, largely through the model and the example of the monastics themselves. You can't be around them and not feel the power of the form and the effect of its skillful use. So the more contact the lay community has with nuns and monks, I believe, the more people will be drawn to them and support them in the years to come. If Buddhism is of value . . . if monasticism is of value . . . if the lay/monastic relationship is of value . . . these will all prosper and grow.

Can you give examples of this growing interest in the traditional forms of Buddhist practice?

I have seen considerable change in simple things like bowing. Years ago there was resistance or reluctance to do this. I think people were shy about



bowing because it is unfamiliar to our culture. They may have been a little embarrassed to bow to the Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha, not to mention bowing to individual nuns or monks. Yet when you look around the room these days—not just at monastic retreats, but at all the retreats—there is a lot more bowing going on. There is much more interest in chanting these days as well.

Monastics preserve the tradition by embodying it.

I've also seen people's relationship with *pindapāta* [offering food] change through the years. On retreats we often set it up so that retreat participants serve the food—not only to the monastics but also to each other. At first, I think people were afraid to participate in that, but now there is always an abundance of people who want to serve. Once one has the experience of offering the food, of actually placing it in the alms bowl directly, one experiences the beauty and wisdom of this simple tradition. The experience draws from the wellspring of our natural, innate wish to be generous and kind. The direct experience of that is so rich and so attractive that one begins to incline towards it.

I think people genuinely want to be good and to feel good, and the lay-monastic relationship is set up as an opportunity to express that goodness regularly. It makes one very hopeful and directly affirms the innate goodness of humanity.

How did you end up teaching?

It is common for people who have spent several years doing this practice and experiencing this tradition to get filled with a tremendous amount of gratitude and appreciation for the teachings. In my own case, seeing how much Buddhism had benefited me, it felt stingy to keep that all to myself. I was

moved to share what I had been learning by offering the teachings to other people. I discussed this with Ajahn Amaro, who is now one of the abbots at Abhayagiri Buddhist Monastery in California, and he encouraged me to follow my heart. For several years I offered classes in an eclectic spiritual center near my home in North Carolina, and later I was invited to be the resident teacher at IMS—a position I held for three and a half years. Since then I've been teaching at several local centers in the United States, primarily the north-east and south.

And now? Where do your greatest interests lie?

I am very much interested in the *suttas*—studying the teachings and learning more and more about what the Buddha said. I have the good fortune of participating in a program organized by Ajahn Amaro and Ajahn Pasanno through Abhayagiri Buddhist Monastery. The program called CALM (Community of Abhayagiri Lay Ministers) is actually a training program for a handful of longtime lay supporters of the monastic community—to train us in the *suttas*, in various meditation practices, and in ceremonial traditions of the Theravada Buddhism. I also have the good fortune of coming here to the study center in Barre several months a year, not only to teach but also to engage in my own research into different aspects of the teachings. I teach what I am most interested in, both in my practice and in my life.

Right now I am particularly interested in the “gradual training” taught by the Buddha. He offered this model for laypeople and monastics alike, and it places a great deal of importance on foundational practices such as *dāna* [generosity] and *sīla* [virtue]. I experience for myself that the more skillful I am in these, the happier I am and, I might add, the better my meditation! The happiness that comes from serving and living well is affecting my meditation tremendously. I feel it maturing through the months and years of practice.

I am also very interested in the power of the reflective mind, and how it is that we gain insight. The mind looks back upon itself, and it is constantly putting things together and figuring things out. With the helpful guidance of the Dhamma, the teachings of the Buddha, we have wonderful and precise pointers to help us know what to look at and to help analyze what we see. I guess you could say that in addition to seeing how virtue supports meditation, I am also very interested in seeing how meditation grows into wisdom. In fact, I have begun working on a book of personal practice stories that describes how we slowly gather insight into the teachings.

The lay-monastic relationship is set up as an opportunity to regularly express the innate goodness of humanity.

One final question . . . how did you get your name and what does it mean?

The 1999 Monastic Retreat at IMS was a particularly moving experience for me. I felt as though my sense of commitment and faith in the Buddha's teaching took a huge leap. At the end of the retreat I asked Ajahn Sucitto for a Pali name as a symbol of this deepening of faith. He gave me the name *Tarāṇiyā*, which means “one who makes a crossing over possible,” “the bridge builder,” “one who carries others over.” He said it was held by several *arahants* (all men, but that's okay) whose *pāramīs* [moral perfections] centered on either ferrying a Buddha across a flood or building a bridge. He also said that it is held by one who is steeped in greathearted Bodhisattva cultivations. Obviously, I have to grow into that part! But I do love having a Pali name. I think it has helped me a lot. 🙏



The Truth of Interpersonal Suffering

and a Full Spectrum
Path to Freedom

Greg Kramer

The framework for all the Buddha teaches is found in direct, immediate experience. What is the texture of this very moment? He does not look for some transcendence that takes us out of the moment, but invites us to be fully present with experience—just as it is. When you read the discourses you get a sense of his humanity, from the occasional sore back to a wry humor. You also see clearly how he spoke of and from this fleshy and challenging human experience.

And the experience of being human includes suffering. That is just part of how it is; it is the first noble truth. The Buddha said:

And what is suffering? Birth is suffering; aging is suffering; sickness is suffering; death is suffering; sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair are suffering; not to obtain what one wants is suffering; in short, the five aggregates affected by clinging are suffering. [M9:15]

Some of what this insight covers I would call biological suffering, such as aging, disease and death. There are also difficulties associated with having senses: the pleasant things we perceive and want and maybe can't get, or that pass away; the unpleasant things we're exposed to, whether smells or sounds or other sense contacts. And we have the psychological suffering of sorrow, lamentation, grief, and so on.

To all this I would add something else: the unique forms of suffering emerging in relationship that have to do with the experience of encountering other people. This is hinted at in the Buddha's reference to separation from what is wanted, and I think it is worth looking at more closely.

My work with dialogic practice began as an inquiry with a colleague into how we can speak or interact online and still be strongly mindful. I learned a lot about communication, relationships, and so on, but over the years, as I developed and taught the practice in retreats, something more basic began to emerge. I saw that people went through the same stages of suffering they encountered in traditional retreats: initial elation, discomforts, and, above all, endless confrontations with suffering. Why should simply being with people and relaxing, speaking honestly, and cultivating a refined awareness bring up so much pain?

I began to see what I came to call interpersonal suffering, the kind of suffering that arises in association with others. This is a very significant subset of human suffering in general. And when we look at it carefully it becomes apparent that it can manifest in both interpersonal and social ways. There is interpersonal suffering arising in the interactions between two individuals, and there is social suffering an individual experiences in relation to groups of people such as ethnic groups or nations.

INTERPERSONAL SUFFERING

Like all experience, interpersonal suffering arises in the same way biological and personal psychological suffering arises. According to the classical description, there is a co-arising of the eye and forms and eye consciousness ("seeing"); when these three things come together, we have this very moment of contact. If what we then see is felt to be pleasant, we want it; and if it is unpleasant, we push it away. These responses are conditioned by—and feed—

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Personal suffering comes from reaction; interpersonal suffering comes from inter-reaction.

greed and aversion, respectively. And if the feeling is neither pleasant nor unpleasant, we may experience a kind of foggy indifference which is a form of ignorance.

If the object you see happens to be another person, the formula is the same. If it is a person you like, there is pulling towards, desire. If it is a person you feel aversion towards, there is pushing away. And if you feel indifferent, there is often a kind of foggy, delusory quality; you almost don't see them, as if they do not really exist. Even the thought of another person can arouse these responses. We need only think of someone we dislike to feel the agitation and aversion, or think of someone we like to feel desire for them.

There is also a special form of contact that arises in the human domain, namely communication via language. When we include words, the field for liking, disliking and delusion expands immensely. This is where we get into the ways we verbally express feelings, share our inner experiences with each other, and form stories and spin yarns. It also includes the whole conceptual world—my ideas and your ideas. The desires, aversions, intense reactions and proliferations associated with language can get quite complex, as you know.

There are no rigid distinctions between personal and interpersonal suffering; their dynamic is fundamentally the same. In both cases, the suffering is not inherent in the experience, but arises from our reaction to experience. Moreover, while personal suffering comes almost entirely from reaction, interpersonal suffering comes also from inter-reaction, which can go both ways. If you are upset because your food tastes bad and you feel really agitated about it, the food is not going to get agitated back at you! Another person will. It is a whole different dynamic, with feedback loops which can get quite troublesome.

It might be worth getting concrete in looking at what makes up these two forms of suffering: It is personal suffering when someone resists doing the dishes because they would rather be reading. It's interpersonal suffering when they are angry about doing the dishes because they don't feel appreciated, or they think someone else should be doing the dishes. It's still just the dishes. Or a person is experiencing personal

suffering due to the inconvenience or pain caused by her illness, but it becomes interpersonal suffering when there is embarrassment because a good friend has to handle her bedpan. Being ill, uncomfortable and scared to die is personal suffering, while grieving on your deathbed about leaving those we love or feeling remorse about unfulfilled relationships is closer to a form of interpersonal suffering.

Some more examples: When someone is concerned about the form of their body because of discomfort, inconvenience or possible medical complications, that is personal suffering. But body concerns due to what someone will think of your hair, or your wrinkles, or some similar physical manifestation—that is interpersonal suffering. The pain of a gunshot wound is personal suffering. The anger at the person who shot you is interpersonal suffering. Anger spreading over to a country or an ethnic group, associated with the person who shot you, would be the social aspect of suffering.

THE ARISING AND CEASING OF SUFFERING

Now we go to the second noble truth. What is the cause of this interpersonal suffering? The Buddha identified it:

It is craving, which brings renewal of being, is accompanied by delight and lust, and delights in this and that; that is, craving for sensual pleasures, craving for being, and craving for non-being. This is called the origin of suffering. [M9:16]

Here the Buddha names three hungers or cravings. These are usually interpreted as personal hungers: sensual craving, the craving to be, and the craving to no longer be. I would like to lay out the interpersonal side of these three hungers now, and discuss how they are the cause of interpersonal suffering. Simply put, interpersonal suffering is caused by interpersonal hunger.

Sensual hunger in the case of personal suffering is based on the craving to gain and hold on to the pleasure and to avoid the pain of physical sensations, tastes, smells and so on. The interpersonal equivalent of that is the pleasure and pain associated with relationships. We seek relational pleasure. We stimulate one another in a kind of social

contract: I'll entertain you, you entertain me, and this is how we'll live our lives together. We have all kinds of ways of stimulating each other, which can spring from the desire for pleasant emotions, the fear of unpleasant emotions such as loneliness, or simply to alleviate the boredom born of fogginess and delusion. It is important to note that this pleasure seeking is a far cry from the joy people bring each other when they relate without grasping, i.e., without coming from an emptiness that must be filled by others.

The "hunger to be" is where things really begin to heat up in interpersonal suffering, because it manifests in the desire to be loved, to be seen, and for the validation of the ego. These are all the hunger to "be" interpersonally, to exist in the eyes of others. The individual hunger to be is simply the existential fear of death. The interpersonal hunger to be is the need to be seen, in all its manifestations.

From infancy we've turned to others, especially the mother, for physical survival and for taking away the pain of hunger. To not be loved meant death—literally. So of course we turned to our parents for love, and as we grew up we turned to others for love—friends, co-workers, and so on. We began to see our existence as valid and meaningful largely through our relationships with others.

This hunger for validation becomes more subtle as we mature. It includes the peer validation that teenagers seek, the work life and accomplishment validation that adults seek, and it includes all the glances, hugs, handshakes, and code words by which we confirm each other's self-concept. You know: "Show me that I exist, I'll show you that you exist, and we'll have this deal going." Based upon this "craving to be" our mutuality is a mutuality of hunger, so even though it may be temporarily satisfied it is always unstable and imbued with discomfort, .

The "hunger to not be" is most evident in the form of social anxiety, shrinking from social encounter out of fear. Here is the basis of feelings of inadequacy and the small suicides of unworthiness and self-hatred. These feelings lead to a shrinking from life, and the hunger to not be manifests as escapism. Escapism can be of very normal sorts, such as television, overwork, overeating, and so on. Or the desire to "not be" can manifest in very serious addictions, and even the most intense

fulfillment of the urge to not be: suicide.

The "social hunger to not be" may be stronger in one person, and the "social hunger to be" may be stronger in another. One person may be out there with their, "Look at me, I'm really special," and another person may say, "Please don't look at me, I'm going to stay hidden as much as I possibly can." But in both cases, there is suffering based on interpersonal manifestations of hunger or craving.

Well, it would be pretty dismal if I stopped now, wouldn't it? The human condition would look pretty miserable. So I think I'll keep going. The third noble truth is the cessation of suffering:

What is the cessation of suffering? It is the remainderless fading away and ceasing, the giving up, relinquishing, letting go, and rejecting of that same craving. [M9:17]

The end of personal suffering is the end of the attachment to the sensations, things, and ideas we experience. It's the collapse of all the structures of self-concept we're busy feeding all the time with our misconceptions. There is an ease, a resting, an unshakeable happiness that emerges from no longer participating in the construction of suffering.

What about the end of interpersonal suffering, what might this look like? What would it be like to be with others with no thirst, with no defenses, no grasping in regards to intimacy? How happy, stable and centered would that be? What would communication be like without any personal agenda whatsoever? What would happen if our need to sustain a social persona collapsed?

A truly peaceful encounter with others is qualitatively different than anything most of us have experienced. It's certainly different from our normal social experiences. It would be authentic, intelligent, and kind. It would be peaceful and imbued with easeful joy. And just as personal liberation lies latent in each moment and is enacted whenever one is able to let go psychologically, so also interpersonal liberation is latent in each social moment. It is normally intertwined with confusion, but when attachment is released—even temporarily—love and compassion emerge. People not wrapped up in hunger and fear are naturally present for each other. And when our interpersonal knots are untied and we recognize our

The hunger for validation becomes more subtle as we mature.

I was grateful to learn the path is so much bigger than mindfulness and concentration.

social identities as fabrications, the personal knots and identities are also weakened. Freedom alone and freedom with others are not two isolated things. Both are based in non-clinging.

The fourth noble truth is the path to the cessation of suffering, to the abandonment of the craving at the root of pain and stress. Being very honest and looking at the pain, acknowledging it and seeing how things really are, points us toward this path. Personal suffering points towards a personal path, and interpersonal suffering points towards an interpersonal path.

While personal practice helps us be free from personal pain, it also contributes to freedom from interpersonal pain. If we have stability and calm and we've begun to let go of the constructs that support self-concept, then we will be more comfortable in social situations. Interpersonal practice is done with other people, and this particularly helps us to be free from interpersonal pain; but it also contributes to freedom from personal pain. If we are not carrying the stresses and identities associated with relational hunger, it's easier to let go of the personal defenses that keep self-concept in place.

AN INTEGRATED PATH

In our lives, of course, the personal and interpersonal dimensions coexist and are completely intertwined. Even right now in this room, each of us is sitting here with all of our individual background bringing us to this moment. And the interior life of each of us is very individual. But there is also a shared experience, here and now. Just as these two truths of personal suffering and interpersonal suffering are intertwined within us, so also the personal path and the interpersonal path are intertwined.

I would like to add to this another distinction: the extraordinary and the ordinary path. In order to explain what I mean by this further discrimination, I have to give you some personal background.

For all the years I was meditating, I was absolutely determined to have my meditation integrated with my daily life. But I found that no matter what my determination, I'd come back from retreat and it would call for a huge

adjustment as I tried to re-enter my ordinary life. It was like a different world. Even though I said all the right things ("Oh, I'm going to be mindful all the time."), I had a very hard time with the transition. Over the years it became less difficult for me, but generally speaking there seemed to be one sort of practice that happened in the meditation hall and on my cushion, and then there was the rest of my life.

I had an immense breakthrough on this issue, a true "Aha!" moment, when instead of trying to fool myself that there was no difference between practice on the cushion and the rest of life, I decided to acknowledge a difference. This eventually led me (as you'll see in more detail soon) to a very profound integration of a different kind. I said, "OK, there is the practice I do in my everyday life, which I call ordinary practice, and then there are times I set aside just for meditation. Such time is actually extra-ordinary. Let's see what the differences are and what we can learn from that."

So the first distinction between ordinary and extraordinary practice is whether special time has been set aside or it is part of your ordinary routine. The second distinction has to do with one's mind state. Any moment is elevated to an extraordinary moment when there is some acknowledgement of the truths of suffering, its arising and cessation, or which is consciously and energetically given to awakening to the fundamental truths of impermanence and impersonality. As Sariputta notes, "Right view, right effort, and right mindfulness run and circle around" each super-ordinary aspect of the path. So with these factors in place, ordinary right speech becomes extraordinary right speech; ordinary right intention becomes extraordinary right intention, and so on. Put another way, as these factors become stronger, whatever you are doing becomes more extraordinary.

When we combine the notion of personal practice and interpersonal practice with the further distinction of ordinary and extraordinary practice, the noble eightfold path is seen to unfold in four quadrants—a broad spectrum path. In each quadrant you have a full path: you have the full eightfold path of ordinary personal practice, the full eightfold path of ordinary interpersonal practice, the full eightfold path of extraordinary interpersonal practice, and extraordinary personal practice.

Let's take a few examples so we can see how this unfolds in our lives. Having a discussion with some friends about stress in our lives, and about how letting go of striving eases the stress, is an ordinary interpersonal practice of right view. Exploring these truths at an Insight Dialogue retreat is an extraordinary interpersonal practice of right view.

Taking a walk alone in nature can be a personal practice of right concentration (which I prefer to call "calm unification of mind"). Calming the breath and entering *jāna* on retreat is the extraordinary personal practice of right concentration.

Working with a therapist under normal circumstances to be free of one's painful personality patterns is the ordinary interpersonal practice of right effort, specifically the effort to abandon arisen unwholesome states. Working with a therapist who is grounded in right view—which includes knowing there is no abiding self to be fixed—and bringing clear effort and strong mindful-

ness to this task, elevates this process to the extraordinary interpersonal practice of right effort.

The personal path tends to incline towards wisdom, towards ultimate reality, towards emptiness. It is an existential path we walk alone, culminating in awakening. The interpersonal path inclines towards compassion, towards relative reality, towards love. It contributes to a harmonious society while supporting the release of socially constructed self-concepts.

The extraordinary path is all about putting aside special time and dedicating ourselves to special practices in order to fundamentally transform the heart. The ordinary path of everyday life has to do with integrating these extraordinary transformations and, above all, cultivating virtue, calm, and wisdom in each and every activity.

All four domains we've talked about—ordinary and extraordinary personal, and ordinary and extraordinary interpersonal, head in the same

direction: towards the non-clinging mind suffused with compassion.

Now each of us of course has different strengths, different inclinations, and so are going to be drawn to some particular area or another. Someone may begin with ordinary right living, another with extraordinary right mindfulness. The beauty of this model is that you can start absolutely anywhere and it leads through the whole thing. The path is completely integrated and holographic: every path factor, every truth, encompasses and leads to every other.

Interestingly, as you acknowledge the difference between these different modes of practice, the split between retreat life and ordinary life, as well as the split between the personal and interpersonal, begins to dissolve. I was grateful to learn that the path is so much bigger than mindfulness and concentration and that every factor of the path is the same whether it unfolds alone or with others, in everyday life or in extraordinary practice. For me, this was a whole new way to look at things and has completely solved the dilemma of integration. It's not about integration, it turns out, it's about recognizing exactly HOW it is all the same path.

Throughout this week we will undertake a systematic exploration of this landscape—a landscape of full-spectrum practice. Our basic practices will be calming down in silence and Insight Dialogue, all in a context of dynamic lovingkindness. We will see how each of the thirty two elements of the path offer a unique opportunity for skillful cultivation of awakening as taught by the Buddha. Each offers a particular perspective on suffering, its arising and its cessation.

At the same time, we will see again and again how each factor in all four domains overlaps with the others, each deepens and enriches the others, and each fulfills every other. The more we explore this realm of practice, the more every aspect of life can be seen as having a single taste—the taste of liberation. 🌱

EXTRAORDINARY PERSONAL

- Extraordinary Personal Right View
- Extraordinary Personal Right Intention
- Extraordinary Personal Right Speech
- Extraordinary Personal Right Action
- Extraordinary Personal Right Living
- Extraordinary Personal Right Effort
- Extraordinary Personal Right Mindfulness
- Extraordinary Personal Right Concentration

EXTRAORDINARY INTERPERSONAL

- Extraordinary Interpersonal Right View
- Extraordinary Interpersonal Right Intention
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- Extraordinary Interpersonal Right Action
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ORDINARY INTERPERSONAL

- Ordinary Interpersonal Right View
- Ordinary Interpersonal Right Intention
- Ordinary Interpersonal Right Speech
- Ordinary Interpersonal Right Action
- Ordinary Interpersonal Right Living
- Ordinary Interpersonal Right Effort
- Ordinary Interpersonal Right Mindfulness
- Ordinary Social Right Concentration

Circle

Thoughts dancing endlessly on the edge of
awareness

images crystallizing
swirling, sparkling, merging
fading into the energy-filled void
emerging in eternally new forms

Reality unfolds
the Universal Song echoes
the finite Self reflects the blinding light
which emanates from both within and
without

reaching for separateness
yearning for unity
shimmering, radiant, flowing
becoming aware of the patterns, the connections
moving toward the center, hesitantly
lovingly
fearfully
joyously

losing one's self, finding one's self
levels within levels
dreams within dreams
quantum shifts in awareness
endless change within the illusion of sameness
the darkness at the end of the cycle,
blocking life's light for a moment
clearing after the pause
rebirth
the Rhythm calls once more
thoughts dancing endlessly...

—Dale E. Buonocore



go out now from your cave
remember its permeable boundaries
touch everything
touch everything lightly
change
change everything
return home.

—Karen Lavender

Presence

Thoughts can take us so far away
Memories and expectations
Yet everything is right before us
Today is a beautiful day

Aware of surroundings
In the here and now
Feeling our feelings
Meeting whatever is sent

Enjoy the sunshine
Smell the sweet air
Listen to the birds sing
Wind in your hair
I'll meet you there

—Jeff Forlenza

Garden Reflection

The only moment
evades perfection
as long as my muscles
brace for escape
as long as my ears are
closed to the distant crows
as long as my eyes
fail to see the bee
enter the honeysuckle flower
as long as the cooling day
cannot be felt as a
sweet playfulness on my skin
as long as the fetid smell
of the washing machine draining
reaches my nostrils with aversion
as long as the chattering
of the caged birds next door
cannot be allowed
without comparison to
the free wheeling grace
of the house martins
as long as I perceive
colours as separate
or myself as separate
or fail to experience
the plum's boughs flexibility
as long as I wish it wouldn't rain
and I refuse to see
the reality of flux
the untenability of life
the vulnerability of my presence here
the invulnerability of being.

—Ruth Meyers

Footprints & Shifting Sands

The day we die
The wind comes down
to take away
our footprints

Four generations from now
No one will know
we existed

Our hour on Earth comes & goes
Our deeds vanish
Washed out by the rain of time

We are snowmen melting
Replenishing the Earth
with our tears

We are Love Bodies glowing
Shining invisible Light Waves
throughout the Universe,
No body can see us

To walk this Earth,
to cry out, to Love strong
To shine Light in dark places...
That is all that is given to us

Take what is given
& walk in Peace
til the wind comes
& blows you away
til Spirit comes
& lifts you up & away
up & away

Take a look down
Take one last look down
What do you see besides
footprints & shifting sands
footprints & shifting sands

—Steve Moore

Truth

I am nameless and small,
the firmament presses its grey hand upon me.

I am ageless; time floats
like clouds across a silent sky.

I am here, burrowing
in my old skin and bones, breathing them.

I am no thing, no sound no where, but
singing a timeless chant all day

to flowers that have not bloomed
to souls that have not passed
to wombs that have not birthed.

—Myrna Patterson

Sitting Here Now

This is how it is
to be sitting here now
thinking about sitting here now
when all I'd like to be is

...utterly present...

spaciously absent
from the thought of sitting here now
from thinking about how it is
to think about sitting here now
when all I'd like to

be

is

...spaciously present...

sitting here now

—Charles Suhor

moment

you wish to feel—
be still

you wish to think—
be silent

you wish to see—
close your eyes

no
past moment

no
future moment

be in the present moment

—Theikdi

Itch of Insight

Book of Life says for every event
there must be a reason.

as the nature of impermanence
characteristic of every season.

annoying itchy sensation
nothing

but another mind creation
that will soon fade away.

—Kory Goldberg





The Five Spiritual Powers

Sarah Doering

THREE
MONTH
RETREAT

OCTOBER 1999

Sarah Doering has had a long association with the Insight Meditation Society and with the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies. On both boards for many years, she has been a devoted practitioner of insight meditation, and has been teaching at IMS for the past several years. Sarah is currently one of the resident teachers at the newly opened Forest Refuge.

For forty-five years after his enlightenment, the Buddha wandered about northern India teaching. He spoke publicly as many as ten thousand times. But he was not teaching in order to argue philosophical theories. He was teaching for one purpose only: to bring to an end all the suffering which he saw around him.

The assumption underlying all his teaching is that we don't have to be the way we are—that all the sorrow and pain and grief and fear that we all know is not necessary. It can be eliminated. New ways of being can be cultivated. He taught so that we may know not suffering, but happiness and peace. These teachings are trainings for a spiritual way of life. This means a way that is real and true, and beneficial for all beings, both now and in times to come.

Tonight I want to speak about five qualities of heart and mind which are known as the "five spiritual powers." They've been called "five priceless jewels," because when they're well developed, the mind resists domination by the dark forces of greed and hate and delusion. When the mind is no longer bound by those energies, then understanding and love have no limits. These five powers are also called the "controlling faculties." When they're strong and balanced, they control the mind, and generate the power which leads to liberation. The five are faith, effort, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom.

When I first heard this list, I was puzzled.

I come from a Christian background. Faith seemed, of course, exactly right to be there. Wisdom, too, belonged on the list. But the others—effort and mindfulness and concentration—sounded very clinical and psychological and dry. Where, I wondered, was love? I did not in any way understand then that the cultivation of these five factors leads directly to love. They're all necessary. They all work together and interweave very closely.

Faith—which here means trust and confidence in the Dharma—inspires an outpouring of energy. When energy is strong, then the effort to be alert and pay attention is easy. Mindfulness prospers and becomes more and more continuous. The stronger the continuity of mindfulness, the more focused and steady the mind. Concentration grows. As concentration deepens, in the stillness of an attentive mind, wisdom emerges. It's the wisdom of emptiness, whose only expression is love.

FAITH

The first of the five faculties, faith, actually is a rather suspect word today. The most conspicuous examples of faith are in the various extremes of religious fundamentalism, where faith is often a coercive force, a force which is used to control insiders so that they'll stay within the confines of the faith. It's also a force that's sometimes imposed upon outsiders in order to encourage them to believe. But faith in the sense that I

want to speak of tonight has nothing to do with force. It has nothing to do with conventional belief. It's an innocence of conviction, an open heart that is not afraid to trust, and so can move beyond the known. It senses the possibility of transcendence—that what seems to be, isn't all there is. It senses that there's some profound human possibility to be realized, even though it's not immediately apparent.

Such faith is born in experience. It can't be given. It arises spontaneously, out of seeing and knowing for oneself. From it flow devotion and gratitude and commitment. It's a natural self-giving. It stems from knowing the problematic nature of life, from realizing that human existence is very imperfect. Because of this one is sensitive to what else might be, to some other way of being. Faith may arise from hearing the Buddha's words that say there's a cause for suffering, a cause that can be removed so that suffering comes to an end. It may arise from seeing someone whose presence, whose manner or words, are so compelling, that they suggest possibilities not at all understood. It may come from reading something that suddenly reveals a meaning that speaks to the heart. It may dawn through music or art or, as happened to me, from a glimpse of something seen in nature.

Each of us has our own story, which brought us here tonight. No one here is without faith. You came in response to an attraction to some wordless possibility—some possibility of discovery, of change, that's implicit in these long weeks of silence. Faith is critical for a spiritual journey, for it's through faith that we move from the known to the unknown. Without faith, not much is possible in any endeavor. If there's no end goal which we particularly value, or if we lack faith in our own strength and ability to get to it, we tend to stay in a rut. We don't go much of anywhere.

When faith first dawns, the mind is filled with brightness and love and devotion. But faith that's new is vulnerable. If it meets a skeptic who doubts, and has many views and opinions, faith wants to run away and hide. At least I did, in those years. Because the source of faith is outside ourselves, we're very dependent on its not changing in any way at all. But gradually faith is internalized. We see for ourselves that the teaching works. We

discover that we can sit with physical pain and not be overwhelmed. We begin to taste the happiness of a concentrated mind. Faith deepens, and gives the courage to go beyond our former limits. We begin to allow ourselves to feel more of what we're feeling. So much of what we feel, we close off, because we fear the pain will be too much to bear. But faith that's been tested in the crucible of experience comes to know that even in the midst of suffering, there is calm.

When we meet difficulties, faith gives the courage to go on. It's important to note, however, that faith is very different from hope. Hope is for a specific outcome. Hope is associated with expectation and desire. If hope is disappointed, sadness and fear or anger are the result. Faith is different. It's trust in the ongoing process. It's confidence that we can handle whatever comes—for in faith, we can. It's knowing that each step we take is an unfolding of our life's journey, even if we don't know at all where we're going.

Faith in the truth of the Dharma, by its very nature, implies faith that we have the ability to realize that truth. The whole movement of deepening faith is inward, toward more and more trust in ourselves, more and more trust in the understanding and the love within our own hearts and our own minds. Faith has a very great influence upon consciousness. That's why it's the first of these spiritual powers. It removes the shadows of doubt that are so debilitating. It gives a clarity to the mind, which is energizing

EFFORT

Energy, or effort, is the second spiritual power. These two words are linked, but they're not quite the same. Energy comes first, and effort channels it, and puts it to use. Nothing happens without effort in any kind of endeavor, but especially, perhaps, in spiritual practice. This practice isn't easy. The instructions are simple, but carrying them out isn't simple. To be with the breath, feeling it, knowing it, and not identifying with it; to be with an emotion, a mind-state, feeling it, knowing, not identifying; to be with sensations, thoughts, the whole spectrum of experience, seeing it clearly and dispassionately—such work is not child's play. A lot of energy is expended here just to get out of the pull of habit, the kind of gravitational pull of

It's through
faith that
we move
from the
known
to the
unknown



the mind that would get us and keep us in the grooves of habit that have been worn over years of time. The mind is used to wandering, just erratically wandering from one thing to the next, keeping itself busy with planning and hoping and fantasizing, fearing, complaining, judging. It doesn't even know that anything might lie outside of its own limited scope.

Right effort is the effort to be mindful, and to bring the mind back when it wanders, so it knows what is happening right now. To do this is really a very delicate balancing act. On the one hand, hard work is needed, in the attempt to keep paying attention. On the other hand, there's nothing to do, because awareness is already present. It's just that we've been distracted. Right effort is not striving. Striving leads to clinging. It reinforces the sense of self, and can be very painful. Right effort isn't trying to get anything, for there's nothing to get. It's not trying to penetrate something and go deeper and deeper. Rather, it's the effort to listen with greater sensitivity. It's a soft receptivity. Just total surrender, receiving and welcoming whatever is here.

When effort is balanced, without any strain, there's no sense of, "I should do this." Rather, there's just a willingness to do. Out of that willingness there comes a more and more constant flow of energy. This quality of energy is bold and courageous. A Pali word describes it as "the state of the heroic ones." It gives patience and perseverance in the face of difficulty. If pain arises, the heat of the energy burns away fear, and makes it possible to do what ordinarily is very difficult to do—to go right to the center of the pain.

There are many levels of effort. Like the gears of a car, one level leads to the next. But the key to them all is being willing to start fresh, to start all over again. At the beginning of each day, at the beginning of each sitting, at the beginning of each breath—to bring back the wandering mind and start fresh. As we become more skilled, effort becomes smoother and steadier, and mindfulness grows.

MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness is the third of the spiritual powers. It's the one factor of mind of which we can never have too much. Mindfulness is the observing power of the mind, the active aspect of awareness. Mindful-

ness means not forgetting to pay attention, not forgetting to be aware of whatever is happening within us, around us, from moment to moment to moment. It's a very subtle process.

When first we notice something, there is a fleeting moment of pure awareness, before the thinking mind jumps in. It's a moment that's nonverbal, pre-verbal. It has in it no thought. It's a moment of seeing with very great clarity and no thought. The thing noticed is not yet separated out, but is simply part of the whole flow of the process of life. Perception then fixates on the thing, puts boundaries around it and labels it. Then the thinking mind jumps in, and the mind is back in its everyday mode.

Under ordinary circumstances, that first pristine moment of awareness is very brief, and it goes unnoticed. What this practice of mindfulness does is to prolong the moments of pre-verbal knowing. The effect of doing that, over time, is profound. It's a kind of deep knowing which changes the way that we understand the world.

When mindfulness is present, it's like an empty mirror. It sees whatever appears before it with no distortion. Mindfulness has no likes and no dislikes. There is no passion or prejudice to color what is seen. It knows things in the round, as it were—in their totality, just as they are.

The question, of course, is, "How can we come to such clarity?" "Interest" is the answer. Get interested in what's going on. Krishnamurti once said that the way to watch thoughts is the way that you would watch a lizard crawling on the ceiling of a room. This seemed to me a very odd recommendation when first I heard it. I had no connection with it at all, until a few years later. Then I found myself on the island of Antigua, in the Caribbean. I had just arrived. It was late at night and I was half-asleep, but too tired to go to bed. Suddenly, out of the corner of my eye, I noticed something moving on the wall. Attention woke up. It was galvanized. Now, what was moving was a lizard. It was a big one, maybe between nine and ten inches long from the tip of its tail to its nose. It was a dull, mottled brown. Nothing remarkable; it looked very ordinary. I sat, attention just riveted, as it climbed the wall, slowly crawled across the ceiling, down the other side, and then slithered out an open window.

Right effort isn't trying to get anything, for there's nothing to get. Rather, it's the effort to listen with greater sensitivity.



The intensity of that brief little moment was so great that I can see every detail in my mind's eye right now. Interest was amazingly total. Awareness was complete. There wasn't a thought, an emotion, to disturb what was seen. All that was there was the seeing of each movement of this little creature from the moment it appeared to the moment it disappeared. Krishnamurti's words came back into my mind then, and I knew exactly what he had meant. Interest makes the difference. When interest is there, awareness is total, and it's effortless.

Now, the breath may not have the same compelling quality as seeing a lizard crawling on the ceiling, but the more careful attention we pay to it, the more we get into the habit of paying attention. Interest grows. Careful attention in itself creates interest, for it brings us close to experience—increasingly close, so that we see the texture, the detail, the remarkable wonder of experience. In the doing there comes a brightness and a vividness to things.

Emily Dickinson knew this quality well. She lived a very quiet life, saw few people, and spent most of her time alone in her room. Yet she was so attentive, and saw with such sensitivity and precision, that she could only sum up her experience in this way: "To live is so startling, there's little time for anything else."

Close attention opens the heart. When there is interest, real interest, there's no judgment. Whatever appears is welcome. Acceptance is unconditional. Awareness has a benevolent quality, a friendly quality, about it, which leads to *bodhicitta*. This welcoming acceptance allows whatever comes to reveal itself in its fullness. Ultimately, mindfulness opens into the realm of the sacred. To speak of knowing things as they are, as they really are—what is that but spiritual talk?

CONCENTRATION

Faith... effort... mindfulness... The fourth spiritual faculty is concentration. Concentration arises naturally out of the effort to be mindful. It gives the power which makes mindfulness so effective. Concentration is often defined as "one-pointed attention." In the context of insight meditation, it is steady, one-pointed attention upon a succession of changing objects. Concentration keeps

attention pinned down upon whatever object mindfulness is noticing. As mindfulness moves from, say, the breath to a sound, concentration moves with it, and again keeps attention focused and steady. In each case it lasts for just a moment, because the mind moves so quickly. But it begins again in the next moment, with the same intensity. This so-called "momentary concentration" provides the power for the work of our practice.

The key to developing concentration is one word: effort. It's the effort to pay close attention, to keep coming back. Usually the energies of the mind are scattered in a thousand different directions. The mind is all over the place, and its energy is simply frittered away in random thoughts and desires, hopes, fears, feelings. All the huge potential power that it has is wasted. But as the effort to be mindful becomes more consistent, these scattered energies come together and converge around a single point, and the mind becomes focused, like a lens. If parallel rays of light fall upon a piece of paper, they won't do much more than warm the paper. But if the same amount of light is focused through a lens, the paper will burst into flame. In the same way, concentration focuses the energy of the mind, and gives it the power to cut through surface appearance.

As concentration deepens, the mind becomes calm and centered. It's less reactive. It comes into greater emotional balance. We can more easily let go and let things be. The mind has a spaciousness which gives room for pain and anger and fear all to arise and pass, without our being broken by them, or needing to act them out.

Concentration is very powerful, but it's only a tool. Despite its astonishing power, it cannot of itself lead to wisdom. When it's balanced with mindfulness, the two together cut through conventional reality, and understanding unfolds by itself.

WISDOM

Wisdom is the last of the spiritual qualities. It is ongoing inspiration for the work of the other four, and also their fulfillment. Wisdom is not knowledge. It cannot be learned from books, for it is intuitive understanding that arises from close observation of experience. It is insight into reality, into

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There is no
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to suffer...
this
baffling
truth
eludes us
until the
mind is
purified.



the nature of things as they are.

One aspect of wisdom is seeing the omnipresence of anicca—impermanence. Wisdom knows that nothing in this conditioned realm will last. It knows that everything that arises passes away. It knows that change occurs at every level from the cosmic to the microscopic. A star, a civilization, a tree, a thought—each arises, evolves through time, disintegrates and disappears. Timetables differ of course, for every phenomenon and event. And change can be so rapid—or so slow—that it is not ordinarily seen at all. But the trajectory is always the same. Whatever is, will be was.

We may think we know this truth, and perhaps we do. But is it living wisdom? For each of us, the mark of impermanence reveals itself most intimately in our inescapable mortality. We all are going to die. However unwelcome that thought may be, death is at the end of every life. You and I are no exception. Everything that is born will die. But because we do not live our lives from this place of understanding, we suffer.

There is a constant clash between the nature of existence and our desires. In a world of radical change, we want permanence and security and enduring happiness, and they cannot be found. We live in an imaginary world, and grasp and cling to the way things used to be, or how we want them to be, and find it hard to accept the way they actually are. The result is dukkha—suffering, all the dissatisfactions and sorrows of the human heart. Dukkha is the second truth, which wisdom more and more deeply comes to know.

But the deepest lesson that wisdom has to teach is the fact of anattā—the fact that nothing is inherently substantial and real. We think that we are separate, solid entities, and struggle to protect and satisfy and gratify our precious sense of self, not understanding that at the closest level of examination, no permanent, unchanging self is ever to be found. The constituents of mind and body are, in fact, in constant flux. Body, sensations, thoughts, emotions, arise and disappear, arise and disappear, moment by moment by moment. Keen observation reveals that mind and body are an ever changing process, a moving energy field. There is no permanent being behind phenomena to whom it all is happen-

ing. There is no one here to suffer. A Sri Lankan monk summed this fact up very simply: “No self. No problem.” Yet this truth is baffling, and eludes us until the mind is purified.

The doors of perception are gradually cleansed as the spiritual powers gather strength. Mindfulness sees ever more deeply, and greed, hate and delusion diminish. Our endless likes and dislikes thin out and fall away. The confusion that clouds perception begins to dissolve. We glimpse the interweaving laws of impermanence, suffering and selflessness, and the knowledge is transforming. The way that we understand ourselves and live our lives begins to change.

We don’t hold on so much, and make fewer demands upon existence. We begin to relax, and ease more into the flow of things. We can delight in the good things of life when they are present, and accept change without protest when they end. The heart opens wider as it learns there is nothing to lose...

The sense of self lessens. We become less selfish, less self centered. As mindfulness reveals our dukkha and we experience its pain, we begin to feel the suffering of others. Boundaries disappear, and we turn to the needs of others as if they were our own. Gradually the delicate art of loving without possessing becomes apparent—the art of how to care, yet not to care. There is a growing sense of similarity, of oneness, of communion with all—which more and more means that the only possible response is concern and care for all.

Wisdom is very hard won. It comes from facing our own suffering and learning the profound lessons that suffering has to teach. The lessons are all about letting go. Not holding on to desire, but letting it go. Wherever we hold, the sense of self is present together with suffering. When we let go, self vanishes and suffering dissolves into lightness, ease and peace.

It is in the deep understanding of suffering that compassion comes to full bloom. For when the heart/mind no longer holds to anything, it is fully open. There is no self-centeredness and so, no separation. No I, no you. Love then is boundless, and ceaselessly responsive. 

Instruction to Administrators

The high officers of this region,
in charge of administration of the city,
are to be addressed as follows
at the command of King Ashoka:

Whatever vision I have,
I want to see carried out in practice
and fulfilled by proper means.
And I regard giving instruction to you
as the principle means to this end.
For you are placed over thousands of beings
for the purpose of earning the people's affection.

All people are as my children.
Just as I desire that my own children
may be provided with complete welfare
and happiness both in this world and the next,
so do I desire the same for all people.
Most of you do not understand how far this matter goes.
Some do understand this, but only partially.

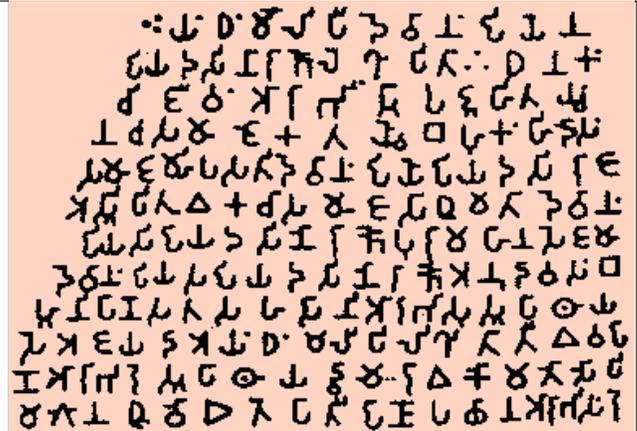
See to it then, since you are well provided for.
If in the course of administration it happens that
a person dies because of imprisonment or torture,
many other people are also deeply injured by this.
You must insist that a middle path
be followed in matters of justice.

But you surely won't achieve success
with any of the following attitudes:
envy, impetuosity, cruelty, impatience,
want of application, laziness or lethargy.
You should wish of yourselves:
"May I not have these attitudes."

The root of the matter, indeed,
is patience and steadfastness.
One who is lethargic in administration will not rise up;
but you should rouse yourselves,
get going, and move forward.

The Slaying of Creatures

Formerly in the kitchen of the king thousands of living creatures
were slaughtered daily for use in curries.
But now, as this edict is being inscribed,
only three living creatures are slaughtered:
two peacocks and one deer, and the deer, moreover, not regularly.
Soon, even these three living creatures will not be slaughtered...



The Rock Inscriptions of King Ashoka

King Ashoka was a remarkable leader,
by any standard.

He inherited from his father and grand-
father an immense kingdom,
encompassing most of present-day India
and Pakistan, which he ruled for more
than forty years from 274 to 232 B.C.E.

Converting to Buddhism early in his
reign, he worked tirelessly to uplift and
civilize his world through the influence
of Dhamma—the teaching of the
Buddha.

He had numerous inscriptions carved on
stones and pillars set up in all reaches of
his empire, but within a few generations
the script he used went out of usage
and people no longer understood the
markings.

All these sayings, and many others, thus
lay unread for centuries, until British
archeologists in the 19th century put the
puzzle together and managed to
decipher both script and language
(which is close to Sanskrit and Pali).

Today Ashoka's wisdom and compassion
ring out clearly, bequeathing to the
modern world an inspired vision of how
the leader of a superpower might use his
influence to steer the world toward a
brighter and more noble future.

*Edited and translated by Andrew Olendzki, following Radha
Kumud Mookerji, Asoka, Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi 1962.*

Ashoka



Harmony Among Traditions

King Ashoka honors all traditions,
and honors both ascetics and house-holders
by giving gifts of various kinds.
But the King himself does not value gifts or homage
as much as growth in the essential teachings of all the traditions.

Many factors contribute to this growth in the essential teachings,
but the process is rooted in the restraint of speech,
insofar as one should not praise only one's own tradition
and condemn the traditions of others without any ground.
Such criticisms should be on specific grounds only.

Rather, the traditions of others should be honored
on this ground and that.
By doing so, one helps one's own tradition to grow,
and benefits the traditions of others as well.
Otherwise, one hurts one's own tradition
and injures the traditions of others.

Harmony alone is commendable.
Toward this end, all should be willing to listen
to the doctrines professed by others.
It is the wish of King Ashoka that in all traditions
there be great learning and benevolent teachings.

And those who are content in their respective traditions
should all be told that the King does not value gifts or homage
as much as that all traditions flourish,
and that there be growth in their essential teachings.

Foreign Policy

It might occur to those outside my kingdom:
"What are the king's intentions towards us?"

This alone is my desire for those outside the kingdom:
that they may understand my kind wishes towards them,
that they may be free from fear of me and trust me,
that they may receive from me only happiness and not sorrow.

And I would further wish that they understand this:
that the king will tolerate in them whatever can be tolerated;
that they may be inspired by me to practice Dhamma;
and that they may thus gain happiness in both this world and the next.

Dhamma Blessings

People perform various ceremonies:
In troubles, marriages of sons and daughters,
birth of children, departures from home . . .
Ceremonies should certainly be performed, but these bear little fruit.

However, what is concerned with Dhamma produces great fruit:
The proper treatment of servants and employees, reverence to teachers,
restraint of violence towards living creatures
and liberality to teachers and ascetics.
These and other such [virtues] are called Dhamma-blessings . . .

Ceremonies other than these are all of doubtful effect.
They may achieve their purpose or they may not.
And they only pertain to this world.
But these ceremonies of Dhamma [described above] are timeless.
Even if one does not achieve one's object in this world,
endless merit is produced for the world beyond.

The Practice of Dhamma

For the past several hundred years
the sacrificial slaughter of animals, cruelty towards living beings,
and the improper treatment of relatives and teachers
have all increased.

But today, because of King Ashoka's practice of Dhamma,
the sound of the war drum has become
the call (not to arms but) to Dhamma.

And to a degree unseen for several hundred years past,
through the edicts of King Ashoka,
the slaughter of animals has ceased,
non-violence towards living beings is practiced,
and relatives, teachers, parents and elders
are all treated with proper respect.

These and many other kinds of Dhamma practice have increased.
And King Ashoka will further increase this practice of Dhamma,
as will his sons, grandsons and great-grandsons, in every era.
And not only will they practice Dhamma through virtuous conduct,
but they will all also teach Dhamma,
for teaching Dhamma is the most important work that can be done.



Right Livelihood

There is no satisfaction for me in exertion and the dispatch of business.
But my highest duty is the promotion of the good of all,
and the root of this is exertion and dispatch of business.
There is no higher work than the promotion of the common welfare.

Whatever exertion I am making,
it is in order that I may discharge a debt to all living beings,
and make them happy in this world,
while they may attain heaven in the world beyond.

For this purpose this edict has been inscribed that it may last for ever,
and that my sons, and grandsons, and great-grandsons
may follow it for the good of all.
But this can only be achieved by great and sustained effort.

The Gift of Dhamma

Thus proclaims King Ashoka:
There is no gift like the gift of Dhamma . . .
which consists of:

the proper treatment of servants and workers,
heeding one's mother and father,
generosity towards friends and acquaintances,
relatives and spiritual teachers,
and abstention from the slaughter of living creatures.

Father, son, brother, master, friend, acquaintance, or neighbor
—all should declare that it is good to do these things.
By means of this gift of Dhamma one succeeds in this world,
while immeasurable merit flows into the world beyond.

Public Works

Everywhere within the dominion of King Ashoka,
and also among the neighbors of his realm
—in South India, Kerala and Sri Lanka,
in the Greek kingdom of Antiochus,
and even among his neighbors—
the King has instituted two kinds of medical treatment:
medical treatment for humans
and medical treatment for animals.

Also roots and fruits and medicinal herbs,
wholesome for humans and for animals,
have been imported and planted wherever they did not exist.
And along the roads wells have been dug
and trees have been planted
for the benefit of both humans and animals.

Glory and Fame

King Ashoka does not regard glory or fame as bringing much gain.
Whatever glory or fame he desires, it would be only for this:
That the people in the present time and in the future might practice
in accordance with Dhamma, and conform to the observances of Dhamma.

For this purpose alone does the King wish for glory or fame.
And what little he exerts himself, it is all for future generations,
and in order that all beings may be free from the bondage of wrong-doing.

Indeed, this is difficult to achieve by those of low rank or high rank,
—except by strenuous effort and renunciation.
But of these [two], it is more difficult for the person of high rank to achieve.

A Radiance of Nuns

Charlotte
Sudhammā
Bhikkhunī



This account of the ordination of nuns in Sri Lanka comes from a private letter sent by one of the participants to her family and friends. She has consented to our printing excerpts from that letter. Some names have been deleted to protect privacy.

Greetings from Sri Lanka!

I write to you now no longer as a novice (Sāmaṇerī)—but as a fully ordained Theravāda Bhikkhunī nun! My new name is Charlotte Sudhammā Bhikkhunī. (Because many monks in Sri Lanka have shared common ancient names, they need to distinguish among them. Thus it became a tradition to add the name of one's hometown; my hometown is “Charlotte,” which now becomes part of my name.) My higher ordination ceremony took place on Feb 28th. I apologize for not informing you about this joyful event in advance, but it had to be kept secret due to international politics!!

The adventures I have been having are beyond description! I shall give some details below. Since coming to Sri Lanka, I have been going here and there, visiting various Bhikkhunī nunneries. The nuns receive me with open arms everywhere I go, and they all urge me to “stay longer” at their centers. My home base remains the Sakyadhīta Center, about 20 miles from Colombo.

SRI LANKAN NUNS

There are three kinds of nuns now in Sri Lanka: the newly restored Order of Bhikkhunīs (women monks), the Ten Precept Sāmaṇerī (novices), and Ten Precept nuns called “Dasa Sīl Mātas” (meaning “Ten Precept Mothers”). Although Dasa Sīl Mātas keep the same precepts as novices, and though many have been nuns for decades, they are considered junior to novices. They cannot directly receive the Bhikkhunī ordination, for they did not Go Forth (receive *pabbajjā*) in the proper way like novices do,

The moon, full, pauses
In coconut tree branches
Crickets sing their bliss.

and are not considered in training to become Bhikkhunīs. Some lay women now go forth as novices and two years later become Bhikkhunīs, thus quickly becoming far senior to even elderly Dasa Sīl Mātas who have lived as nuns for forty years. This seems painful for everyone.

I recently saw a couple of very senior Dasa Sīl Mātas receive the novice ordination from Bhikkhunīs; they both wept. Because this was too long in coming? Because they are now at the bottom of a hierarchy after having been very senior for so long? Or did they weep with joy? I do not know. It can be a scary move, if only because the government of Sri Lanka gives financial support to ordained people, including the Dasa Sīl Mātas, but not the Bhikkhunīs(!), who most monks do not yet acknowledge as existing.

Another time I witnessed a beautiful 15-year old girl receiving novice ordination and putting on the Robe. I observed this girl novice for a few days afterwards; with her apparently flawless personality and her beauty she surely would have been married before long. It struck me how good it is to provide this option for someone such as her: a life of profound virtue. (Sri Lankans ordain for life.) As one monk said in a speech after my ordination, quoting the great Ven. Ānanda Maitreyya, “These women are not asking for a fancy life, they are asking us monks to give them virtue—and we should give it to them!”

WHY THE SECRECY?

A great lady and very talented activist in Sri Lanka named Ms. Ranjani de Silva is the one person most responsible for

resurrecting the Theravāda Bhikkhunī Order. Ms. Ranjani not only organizes things on a large scale, setting up ceremonies and getting monks to participate and so forth; she also tends to the little details, right down to attendees' bus fare and purchasing safety pins to keep the candidates' outfits from slipping during the ceremony. All the Sri Lankan Bhikkhunīs look to her as their mother. She treats them as her daughters, helping them in every way and scolding them when she deems it necessary.

Last fall Ms. Ranjani and the Bhikkhunīs were planning for a large ordination ceremony this spring, to ordain many novices to become Bhikkhunīs, as they did last spring. However, for Bhikkhunī ordination to be valid, senior monks must also take part; the monks who had committed to this year's ceremony backed out, for various reasons, so the group ordination got postponed to 2004.

Yet one novice nun could not wait for 2004. This was the former Dr. Chatsumarn Kabilsingh, a very famous professor of Buddhism and Buddhist activist in Thailand, now Ven. Dhammānandā. A couple of years ago she came to Sri Lanka and received the novice ordination, making headlines around the world for her bold move in the face of fierce opposition of the united brotherhood of Thai monks. She counted on receiving higher ordination in Sri Lanka at this time. She also intended to bring a Thai lay woman with her to receive the Going Forth and The Robe as a novice nun. Even sympathetic Thai monks won't give novice ordination to women, due to fear of the other monks.

Ven. Dhammānandā intends to get the Bhikkhunī Order going in Thailand, despite the extreme opposition she faces. This is one brave and determined woman! I've gotten to know her well from close association during the past couple of weeks. She does this not to be a feminist troublemaker, but out of her vision for the future of Buddhism. She wants to strengthen the foundations through which the teachings may continue over the coming centuries.

Waiting another year would have caused this Thai nun problems, for she has a lot of plans in the works and everything depended upon this ordination. Therefore Ms. Ranjani went to work, brilliantly overcoming every obstacle, including internal politics among

supportive monks and nuns, to create a small, "quiet" ceremony just for this one novice.

Ms. Ranjani and I had made plans for her to host me here in Sri Lanka; she had told me of the planned group ordination, and then told me the sad news of its cancellation. Later, to my surprise and joy, she confided to me about the private ceremony and suggested that I may join Ven. Dhammānandā. Increasing my joy, Bhante Gunaratana (the master who gave me novice ordination in America several years ago) sent his blessings. We kept the ceremony secret so that the news would not reach the populace of Thailand and perhaps cause so much pressure on the venerable monks giving the ordination that they might reconsider. The secret got out anyway but did not stop the ceremony after all.

The whole thing got even more controversial than anticipated, for in the last week before the ceremony the monks ushered in a couple of Burmese novice nuns to join us for Bhikkhunī ordination. Ms. Ranjani and her people did not want to take on Burma! —not yet anyway, and certainly not in Ven. Dhammānandā's personal ceremony. Already she may face excessive negative press in Thailand; outrage coming from Burma seems unlikely to help Ven. Dhammānandā's cause in Thailand. The brotherhood of Burmese monks opposes Bhikkhunī ordination passionately.

However, the great compassion of our senior Sri Lankan monks who give ordination to women, knows no bounds. They remain fearless even of the power of Burmese monks. (Burmese and Sri Lankan monks have close ties of friendship, which is less common among Thai and Sri Lankan monks.) Since the monks seemed willing to go ahead with the ceremony, these Burmese nuns were allowed to join us.

One Burmese nun is elderly and will return to America, where she has citizenship, so she remains safe. The other nun, however, is a pretty, young-looking, extremely learned nun whose name is well known in Burma. Police and government officials harassed her terribly after she returned to Burma from Sri Lanka as a novice; her Bhikkhunī ordination may provoke more forceful confrontations. Let us all send her our blessings!



The whole thing got even more controversial than anticipated.

THE ORDINATION CEREMONY

The night before the ceremony we had an all-night blessing chanting (*paritta* chanting) by a group of about a dozen Bhikkhunīs at the home of Ms. Ranjani de Silva. The event marked both the ordination ceremony and the 5th year anniversary of Ms. Ranjani's husband's death. The chanting event happened in grand traditional style, with drummers, and a little special hut made of decorative paper (exquisitely cut into lacy designs) that the nuns sat inside while chanting. The beautiful little hut sat in the center of Ranjani's living room; devotees sat on mats on the floor around it. There were coconut flowers in vases on the floor beside the hut, with little oil lamps balanced on top of the flowers; delicate branches of betel leaves, hanging down, decorated the top of the hut.

Usually only monks do this kind of important ceremony, but now that the Bhikkhunī Order has been revived, these nuns have authority to do such things too. How impressive the Bhikkhunīs looked as they walked in ceremoniously, single-file! They entered following a fellow who carried on his head a cloth-covered golden stūpa (a bell-shaped casket) containing sacred relics, with drummers beating shockingly loud drums. (I did not dare cover my ears—surely an insulting act by a nun in such a formal setting—so I just resigned myself to donating some of my hearing ability to the cause.)

Ordination day started with the conclusion of the chanting ceremony. Then we Bhikkhunī candidates donned lay persons' white clothing and drove to the monastery for the ceremony. We had to start all over, beginning with Going Forth from lay life to novicehood again! I felt vulnerable, almost naked, without the Robe on, after nearly four years of constantly wearing it. When our van stopped en route to let someone purchase a needed item, I watched people passing by on the crowded sidewalk with great interest. Would they stare at me as they do when I am in robes? Usually Sri Lankans gape at me, from up to 100 feet away, even when I zip by in a speeding bus or van. But as I sat there in traditional white clothes, even with my head bald, folks walked right alongside the van without much interest in my appearance. Amazing difference.

Ordination involved three separate ceremonies. First the Going Forth as novices, then ordination by the Bhikkhunīs, then ordination by the Bhikkhus. All of it took tremendous exertion, with reciting memorized lines in the Pāli language; many bows down to the floor and back to standing position again and again; a difficult crouching position held for long periods, with hands in prayer position (*anjali*) above the head; in sweltering heat; in a crowded room (the *śra*). And, after the initial part conducted in the white clothes, it was all done wearing unbelievable layers of robe clothing! We wore the bathing robe underneath the under-robe, a long-sleeved blouse, the upper robe, and the remarkably heavy double-layer outer robe folded over the left shoulder.

My arms shook and I contemplated the non-self nature of this suffering body, thereby succeeding in overcoming the intense temptation to drop my arms at the wrong times to rest them. I did not give in even once, no matter how the arms shook. I viewed them as not “my” arms; not “my” problem that the body protested so much. Sweat dripped from my face and hands. The mat upon which I bowed became visibly drenched.

The four of us received ordination together, at the same time, but because I sat in the “senior” position, to the right of the other three, they became junior to me. Last week we debated this seating order. I insisted to Ven. Dhammānandā that she should become senior to me, for she has been a university professor of Buddhism for many years, and a Buddhist activist, she is famous in her country, she is the master of a temple, and she is visibly older than I. For these reasons I find it unsuitable that when I will visit her temple she must bow to me in front of her disciples. She countered that I have been a novice nun for nearly four years whereas she went forth only two years ago, thus I should keep seniority. She added that it will be “good for (her) ego” for me to remain senior to her; I cried out “What about MY ego?!” which made everyone laugh, and there the discussion ended.

Ten Bhikkhunīs and a dozen Bhikkhus gave us our ordination. When finished I could hardly believe it. There were four of us new Bhikkhunīs, and we all seemed dazed. Also there was the newly ordained novice from



My arms shook and I contemplated the non-self nature of this suffering body.

Thailand, looking resplendent in her newly gained gold robes. We walked as a group straight from the sacred boundary to a large hall filled with supporters, seating ourselves in front. There a couple of the monks gave us exhortations, reminding us not to do any of the eight deeds that will ruin our nunhood, and so forth.

One very venerable monk who came from overseas to attend our ordination begged us not to be aggressive feminists, and especially not to openly reject the eight *gadhanna* rules (a set of nuns' rules to which most Western women react badly, and which some scholars reject as not having come from the Buddha.) He said that we may view the eight special rules as not having come from the Buddha, but as more like an Amendment to the US Constitution: something that did not come from Founding Fathers but to be followed nonetheless. He asked us to please follow them and not openly speak against them, at least until we Bhikkhunīs have gained acceptance from the Theravāda monks. His points were well taken.

AFTERWARDS A...WHAT?

W e five and the other nuns and our supporters piled into vans and headed to a reception at Sakyadhīta. Ms. Ranjani had hinted excitedly that she planned something special, and I heard that it involved drummers, but no one told me what it would be. I almost did not want to know. I thought I may die of embarrassment if it would turn out to be some kind of ostentatious ceremony.

En route to the center, the van stopped at the village turn-off, about a mile from Sakyadhīta, and people ordered us to get out. Mystified, we complied. We encountered a large crowd, and people came up to us, bowing. Someone thrust a great, decorated fan in my hands, and the other new Bhikkhunīs also received one each. (The novice got a smaller fan.) The handle of the fan seemed heavy in my hands. Then a senior nun came along calling out orders, sending a mass of schoolchildren carrying colorful Buddhist flags down the road towards the village, walking in formation. Then it finally dawned on me: a parade! Omigod! We are heading up a parade!!

Someone tried to place our famous Ven. Dhammānandā ahead of me, but she scooted behind me, reminding everyone that I am “senior” to her—yikes! Suddenly I realized it is not us but it is I who shall lead the nuns in the parade!! Cameras pointed at us. Then the senior nun cried out to us, “Go! Go!” We marched forward, with some dancers and drummers just ahead of me. A small boy carried a long, decorative pole immediately in front of me; people held large, gaily decorated yellow parasols over each new Bhikkhunī.

A large group of Bhikkhunīs, novices and Dasa Sīl Mātas followed us new Bhikkhunīs — about forty five nuns total (wearing monk-robos of varying shades of orange, yellow or gold). What a great sight this long line of nuns must have been!

The whole village turned out of course, and others came too I imagine. As I walked I dwelled upon thoughts of blessings for these poor but good villagers, wishing them prosperity, freedom from violence, and every kind of blessing I could think of—blessings for them, their land, even for their animals... I felt the power of the good things that had happened that day like a wave of light pouring through me, and outwards, all around. I barely smiled, which is unusual for me, but my face, my eyes, crinkled upward with joy. I felt absolutely radiant.

The parade went down the main street, then down our dirt road... I myself saw nothing of the parade. I just saw the active feet of the dancers and drummers ahead of me, and gold sparkles from the costumes of the dancers; my gaze stayed low as I concentrated on sending blessings. I barely even looked up towards the people gathered along the sides of the road, I just saw them from the corner of my eye. We would walk about ten feet to a casual drum beat, then the drummers would break into mad thunderous drumming, and the dancers would go wild with their dancing, for about a minute. Suddenly the drumming would drop off to a relaxed walking beat, and we would resume walking as before.

The parade carried on, all the way up to the entrance to the Sakyadhīta compound, where a crowd awaited us, and right up the steps into the meditation hall. I kicked off my shoes and, still not looking around, continued



As I
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forward to the very front of the room, then paused, uncertain, until someone waved me into a seat at the front. My new Bhikkhuni sisters and the new novice sat up front beside me, and the other nuns sat all along the sides and back of the room. The great monk who led our ordination ceremony (who, at age eighty five, is a formidable, sharp-minded master), gave a talk. The new Bhikkhuni Dhammānandā also gave a talk, explaining the significance of the day's events in terms of the history of the nuns' Order.

Then Ms. Ranjani asked me to give a short speech, so I did. The hall was crowded with women, mostly older lay women, all seated on mats on the floor. So I gave a talk aimed at them. I started off saying I feel joyful today, so I want to talk about joy. I mentioned that most of them probably had breastfed their hungry babies; then I used the sweetness and wholesomeness of breast milk as a metaphor. I pointed out that their children, when older, remain hungry—as do these ladies' husbands and other relatives—and these hungry relatives look for "food" in unwholesome activities such as watching TV and drinking alcohol. I said that the ladies need to "feed" their families something sweet and wholesome like breast milk, but what? "Joy!" I said.

Then I reminded them of the joy that they feel from offering flowers and so forth to shrines (truly I never saw such pious people in my life!), and said to keep that joy going through mental cultivation (*bhāvanā*) and morality (*sīla*). This way they can come home still vibrating with that joy, and thus feed it to their families, who are so hungry for love and joy. Regarding morality I emphasized the need for right speech since these good ladies probably do not engage in other unwholesome activities. Whenever the ladies appreciated what someone said they cried out, "Sādhu! Sādhu! Sāādhuuu!"

But really I thought that our good elderly monk was going to faint when I started talking about breast milk! He seemed a bit, well, green, for a few moments. The villagers pressed gifts into our hands afterwards, mostly bars of soap—all they can afford, and apparently considered auspicious. I have been given enough soap in Sri Lanka to wash an army for a month.

The next day a few of us nuns went on alms round through the village. The village had not seen an alms round in decades. The tradition of going for alms has pretty much died out in this country. Elderly lay folks remember it fondly.

The village is mostly arranged along just a few long roads, with all the houses facing the road. Sakyadhīta center is at the end of one of these, so we could simply walk forwards up this long road. People at the first few houses quickly came out at the sight of us, which we had expected, since a neighbor had organized them.

Then something happened that took my breath away as it unfolded before me: the word spread. People came hurrying out of their houses bearing food and bowing to us. After some time we began to ask each other, "Should we keep walking, or turn back now?" Then one of us would say, "Look, there are more people ahead waiting for us; we have to keep going." We had to keep going. And going, on and on. The further we went, the further word spread, and more people came hastening out with some bits of food to give us. These are poor people. They have little to offer, but what they had, they wanted to give. Some friends followed along and put food into bags as our bowls filled. Still, we could see more people coming out of their houses. Finally we realized that there would be no end to it, so we stopped in the street and let everyone in sight come to us as we waited there; then we turned back, retracing our steps. More people came out with food on the return route.

I still weep to think of the pious old ladies forcing their aged bodies to bow down to the street before us. I also feel greatly moved to consider that we saw not only the old people along the route, but also some children. Thus even fifty years hence, at least some people will remain alive who once witnessed an alms round, seeing such profound piety in action, and there will remain the potential for revival of this ancient and beautiful tradition.

Enough for now.

*May you be well, and happy and peaceful!
May you receive your every wholesome wish!*



What little these people had to offer, they wanted to give.

This material comes from a weekend program offered at BCBS in January that was specially intended for psychotherapists. The program consisted of continuous, silent practice of insight meditation, from Friday evening to Sunday morning, and then concluded with an open discussion. The program was meant as a gathering of peers and was led by **Trudy Goodman** and **Chris Germer**, both members of the **Institute for Meditation and Psychotherapy**.



A Discussion Among Psychologists

Trudy Goodman
& Chris Germer

1 Meditating Therapist	2 Mindfulness-Informed Psychotherapy	3 Mindfulness-Based Psychotherapy	4 Meditating Client
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There are a number of different approaches we might take to mindfulness practice in psychotherapy, and these can be arranged along a continuum of increasing practical application to the life of the client. The first approach is the *meditating therapist*; that’s all of us. We may take our experience and insight into the therapy room and apply it in various levels of engagement.

The next stage along the continuum might be *mindfulness-informed* psychotherapy. Much of what has been written on the subject falls into this general category. Mark Epstein’s book *Thoughts Without a Thinker* is one example. Another good new book by Barry Magid is called *Ordinary Mind*. And Anthony Molino wrote *The Couch and the Tree*, an edited collection of essays on the interface of meditation and psychotherapy. John Welwood also wrote many books, including *Toward the Psychology of Awakening*.

Moving on, we come to *mindfulness-based* psychotherapy, which actually has technical interventions based on meditation techniques and understanding. There is Marsha Linehan’s *Dialectical Behavior Therapy*, of course; and we might include a book by Jeffrey Schwartz called *Brainlock*. I found this book

deceptively great. At first it may seem like a self-help book, but as you internalize his principles for treating obsessive-compulsive disorder, it’s remarkably helpful. Tara Bennett-Goleman recently came out with *Emotional Alchemy*, and she did some nice things in that book. For example, she emphasizes emotions in the whole cognitive therapy world, and follows the work of her supervisor Jeffrey Young, who wrote about schemas or core beliefs. She brings mindfulness to core beliefs, which is like taking a lightning bolt and breaking up a whole mountain. It’s a powerful technology, and is worth reading.

One of the more helpful books for bringing mindfulness into the psychotherapy world is Zindel Segal’s book, *Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy for Depression*. He and his colleagues worked with Jon Kabat-Zinn, and also had lots of experience working with depression. They created an eight-week treatment program for depression, following the meditation techniques used in the Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction program. The book describes the treatment in detail and their evaluation research. Their placebo group was made up of patients who were in ongoing therapy, while the treatment group consisted of people who also

took the mindfulness-based cognitive therapy program.

Five years afterwards, relapse rates for people in the treatment group were almost half that of patients in the control group. Sixty-six percent of the people who did not take the mindfulness group had a depression relapse within five years, compared with only thirty-seven percent of those who had practiced meditation. That’s remarkable.

Also interesting is the fact that those who benefited most from the program were people who had *recurrent* episodes of depression. The people who had only one or two episodes prior to treatment did not benefit more than the placebo group from their specialized mindfulness treatment. Why do you think that would be?

One hypothesis is that people who have recurrent depression ruminate—there is a lot of internal talking. Mindfulness practice goes deeply into the mind and exposes that conversation, allowing us to re-evaluate it and to respond rather than react to it. The researchers surmised that people who only had one or two episodes probably had a reactive or situational depression, whereas those who had more episodes had developed a ruminative condition or style which made them vulnerable to depression again and again. The

mindfulness practice seemed to change that significantly, which is also remarkable.

So this sort of treatment would be an example of mindfulness-based psychotherapy. Perhaps the most practical application for clients of mindfulness in psychotherapy might be the *meditating client*. This is rare, of course, and it is important to note that meditation is not for everyone. There are many cases when meditation would not be recommended, and might even be harmful. But when one is able to work with a client at the level of awareness offered by meditation practice, some wonderful transformations can occur.

Participant: I'm quite new to Buddhism; I've read something about it, but still have a lot to learn. At first I thought it was all this warm, fuzzy stuff. Then I realized it's much more wonderful than that, but even so it's not often warm and fuzzy. Can you say a little more about what mindfulness practice is bringing to the enterprise of psychotherapy?

Chris: The core notion of the mindfulness model, at least as it is evolving at the Institute for Meditation and Psychotherapy and at the hands of other colleagues, is to first facilitate awareness and acceptance and, secondarily, change.

In meditation practice we are continually paying attention, and ideally we are doing so without judgment and with an accepting heart. But we so often get swept up in our dramas or stories, which can be seen as merely the product of conditioning. Suffering begins as soon as we get *entangled*—that's a key word for this model—in our conditioning. If it's a good story, we enjoy it and we suffer when we get dropped. If it's a bad story, we get dragged along and are very unhappy. But as long as we're entangled in the conditioned drama, we are participating in a process of suffering.

Let's look for a moment at a model worked out by one of our founding colleagues, Phil Aranow. He describes two basic conditions of mind. The one we are usually in, the conditioned mind, is composed of automatic thought patterns which are mostly unconscious and quite repetitive. It includes a lot of regret about the past and anxiety about the future. Attention hops like a

FROM FRIDAY EVENING'S OPENING TALK TRUDY GOODMAN

I think it is essential for us as therapists to have reliable, renewable resources of refuge. We offer so much. We bring so much attention to others. We have to deal with the secondary trauma of some of the things we hear, which can be so painful. We experience not only the pain of it having to happen to the person we care about and we're working with, but also the pain of such things existing in the world, and of bearing witness to them. To have sources of refuge is such a kindness.

The Buddha said, "I teach only suffering and the end of suffering." Such a simple thought! First the truth that there is suffering, no matter how much we may wish to deny or run from it, and then the very powerful truth that there is a possible end to suffering.

One person talked about coming to a meditation retreat so as not to run from the peace that is possible here in the silence. In a way that doesn't make sense. "Why would I run from this?" But I understand why. It's because when we decide to practice peace, what we encounter is everything that is not peaceful in us.

When we decide to practice lovingkindness meditation—some of you might have done *metta* meditation—what do you encounter? Do you just swim around in a sea of love? Yes, you encounter some very wonderful feelings of friendliness and warmth and kindness, *and* everything that stands in the way of experiencing that. You find everything in you that is not of love. That, I think, is why we run from this place. "Quick! A cup of tea!" It can be anything. "I need another blanket!" "Let me out of here!"

We do this because even though it's a wish-fulfilling jewel, even though we are promised a way to end suffering, "the way out is through." It's just like in psychotherapy. So we come into this beautiful, pristine meditation hall. One of my Zen teachers used to call the *zendo* a "cesspool," because we encounter all of the stuff we wish we could just flush down the toilet and be rid of. If only there was such a cathartic theory of the emotions! People could come to therapy and get angry and then deposit it in our office, close the door, and never experience anger again. It doesn't work that way, for us as clinicians or as meditators. This is why we long for this place, and also run from it.

The instructions are simple. The practice is challenging. We've come to the forest, the snow-covered, soft, soft forest, and we're concentrating our minds. We're cultivating the power of attention. We're cultivating this possibility of the end of suffering, of everyday *nibbana*. It's the realm that cools down the heat, quenches the thirst, warms up the snow, and extinguishes the suffering existing in our daily life. Automatically, without our being conscious of it all the time, it really is a nourishing process. It really is a refuge for our life all the time.

monkey from one subject to another as we try to hang on to things that feel good and avoid things that feel bad.

Then in meditation, and at other times in our lives, we may have moments of being aware of the conditioning. These are moments of insight, in which we may notice that we have been carried away on some conditioned train of thought. In meditation jargon we say that the mind has wandered from the primary object of awareness, say the breath, and we gently, without judgment, bring it back. That is a moment of insight—modest, but important.

Such moments of awareness require a great deal of conscious presence, and are thus not merely the product of unconscious conditioning. In such present-focused moments, the mind is responding rather than reacting to presenting phenomena. Meditation involves going through this cycle again and again. We are entangled in our thoughts, we notice it and pop out, and then we get pulled back into the stories. Then we pop out again, get pulled back, over and over.

This same sort of process occurs in psychotherapy. Our patients are entangled in their conditioned thinking. They're coming to us in order to get disentangled. Now the key is: Are we going to get entangled in their stories and then be unable to help—because we're both caught? By cultivating our own mindfulness practice, and by not running away from the experiences engendered in us, we can be aware of the entanglement and help disentangle it through any number of interventions.

Participant: Could you please clarify what you mean about “respond versus react?”

Chris: Sure. Jon Kabat-Zinn has written very nicely about that in his book *Full Catastrophe Living*. When we are awake to our conditioning, then we can choose, “Do I want to do this, or do I want to do that?” When we are not, we are just linked inexorably to go down the same mind-road we did yesterday.

There is another book I would recommend on this subject, called *The Heart of Addiction* by Lance Dodes. It is not billed as such, but I consider it a mindfulness-based book on addiction. He says that addiction starts the moment you think about, for example, alcohol, and you start to feel better. The anxiety decreases. When you have a bad day at work and you think, “Ah, I can have a drink on the way home,” the anxiety subsides.

If at that moment you have the mindfulness to enter that place and say, “Oh, well, I could drink, but I could also take a bike ride, or I could also go to the movies...” In other words, when we can introduce at that early stage of decision-making a diversity of options for reducing anxiety—that's how we begin to break the addiction. This is an example of responding rather than reacting.

Most people here have been meditating a while or thinking along these lines. Perhaps some of you can say more about ways or instances in which you might be integrating meditation and psychotherapy in your own professional work.

Participant: What you seem to be describing here sounds to me like doing good psychotherapy. You're framing this in terms of bringing mindfulness to the work, but it's really about joining with the client. Starting with where the client is, the therapist needs to be able to reflect back what she or he is seeing in a way that is digestible by the client. It seems you are also saying the mindfulness helps with tolerance, with being able to sit deeply with a client rather than warding off.

Chris: I think in any school of psychology we can aspire to do good therapy. If we are practicing mindfulness, then when we go into the therapy room we may draw upon the practice to guide or help us see certain things. The non-avoidance of suffering you mentioned is one of these; another is a greater precision of moment-to-moment awareness.

Participant: It seems Buddhism has a precise vocabulary useful for its own purposes, but I have found it is not always easy using these words in more traditional psychotherapeutic settings. People are scared off by it, or just don't get it. I do mostly psychoanalytic therapy, and work with a lot of teenagers. Even when I use a word like “suffering” in a Buddhist sense, they often don't pick up on it.

Chris: I know what you mean. I once used the language of mindfulness and a patient said, “I'm not going to become a Buddhist!” What he was actually saying was, “I want you to pay attention to *me*, okay? Not just run your shtick by me.” That was a wake-up call.

Participant: One issue I had struggled with, and received a lot of help from the meditation practice, has to do perhaps with the Buddhist notion of non-self. I work with couples, and I found I was really fearful about confronting emotional abuse when it was coming at me, especially from the male partner. It's because of my own dynamics, I know. As I worked that through, I found it helped a lot for me to think of myself simply as a mirror—that ubiquitous Buddhist image. When truly mirroring what is unfolding, rather than just playing out your own dynamics, then there is a truth manifesting that eventually has to be absorbed.

I was working with a couple once who had been to four other therapists. When you hear that you think, “Uh,oh.” They show up at my office, and are already fighting with each other in the waiting room. That's when you know you really have your work cut out for you! When I felt bullied by the man, I simply pointed it out. He had a strong reaction: “Why are you calling me a bully?” And I simply said, “Well, because that's what I just saw happening here.”

It turned out the other therapists were not calling him on it, and were sort of dancing around the issue with suggestions of “I-reflective” communication and so forth. This just allowed

the couple to blame the therapist for being inept and to continue in their unhealthy dynamic. When I was able to confront what was happening there, things got a lot better very quickly. But I really had to work at taking myself and my own conditioning out of the situation and focusing on the simple mirroring of what I saw happening.

Participant: I agree about the importance of not necessarily trying to change what's going on with a client but rather of observing it carefully and truthfully. Then—something will shift. It is so much like the meditation practice, isn't it?

Chris: You describe a process very much like what Zindel Segal and his co-authors talk about in their book *Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy for Depression*, when they discuss developing a *de-centered* relationship. It's a matter of no longer being centered in our story about things, but becoming de-centered from it so we can witness our story instead. Witness the depressive ruminations that cause relapse, witness the blocks to our initiative to go forward, and then re-author the script.

Participant: But I am most interested in what this practice of mindfulness adds to that perspective. Therapy does those things very nicely, but there are two things I've found mindfulness adds. The first thing it adds is a non-verbal way of experiencing emotions and reality—psychotherapists are so verbal and intellectual. The second thing is compassion, which I don't think Freud talked a whole lot about.

Chris: I think he had compassion, but he didn't talk about it. It was unscientific.

Participant: I have several clients who have had traumatic losses in their lives, and am currently working with a woman who has progressive MS [multiple sclerosis]. When she first came to me she was still in very good health, but knew the changes were coming. One of the things she told me about herself early on was, "I love to

read, I love to cook, and I love sex." First she lost her taste buds. Then she lost her eyesight. Then she lost all sensation from the waist down. It's a very sad process. One of the things I have found myself struggling with as a therapist is a feeling towards some of my clients, "I've never been where you're going. How can I be helpful if I've never been there? Do I even have the right to talk about this with you?"

What meditation has done for me is help me find in my responses and reactions the places where I do have a similar experience. I have at least touched some of those experiences, and can relate to the fear about "Who will take care of me as a single woman as I go through all this?" Meditation has been very helpful to me as I explore this common ground, which can only come from standing back from my story line. As I remove the details of my own conditioning, I find myself more capable of opening up to a more universal human experience.

Participant: Something I use a lot in my professional work is *noticing*. I ask some of my clients to just keep track of things, perhaps only a few times a week, and notice what has happened. I suspect this is a form of mindfulness. Sometimes when you notice what is going on when you're drinking, for example, the noticing of it brings some information that can be useful. Both the therapist and the client may notice patterns of behavior or motivation that were otherwise unobserved.

There was also a time about ten years ago when I worked with elementary school children. The Ninja Turtles were big, and apparently they do meditation as part of their martial arts. So I used that to talk about a skill rooted in concentration that caused them to be powerful. "You too could practice that," I would say. I'd encourage them to try to pay attention to their breath, to see if they could do it ten times, maybe a couple of times a day. It's hard to judge the effects of that, but the overall therapy ultimately worked and it felt good to stop and breathe.

Chris: You are talking about two ways of developing the de-centered relationship to experience, through noticing and through breathing space. Mindful breathing is really useful for many, many patients. It momentarily interrupts some troubling, maladaptive, difficult thought patterns. Thich Nhat Hanh, the great Buddhist teacher, says when you're in a traffic jam and the person in front of you puts on the red brake light, that means, "Stop and breathe."

Participant: I'm involved with a foundation [www.innerkidz.com] that is involved in bringing mindfulness into the schools. I've taught kids dependent origination just with eating an apple. It's somewhat like creating a breathing space. They absolutely take to it, and they love it. We were taught by one of my teachers, Jean Piaget, that children were not capable of this. It's not true! They are really capable—not of sitting for hours in stillness, but that's not what they're doing. I would recommend a book on the subject by Zimmer called *Teaching Meditation to Children*.

Participant: I too have worked primarily with adolescents, using Jon Kabat-Zinn's program. I also worked with patients who had eating disorders, using the body scan. It was really helpful for them just having a felt sense of their bodies. It was different from what their minds were telling them. I have worked with some people who were so totally lost in their stories I felt they really needed some kind of mindfulness training to be able to have some success in therapy. Depending on the person, either it was helpful or they just couldn't handle it.

Chris: Some clients take to meditation and some don't. There has been a lot of research on this, and I have actually reviewed much of it. One interesting fact I have learned has to do with which people continue to practice and which do not. What do you think? Will patients or non-patients be more likely to be meditating two or three years after they have learned it? It's

actually patients, and to a significantly greater degree.

Back in the 80's, Delmonte and Jon Kabat-Zinn independently collected data on meditation drop-out rates. Loosely combining their findings...after three months, 36% of non-patients had quit meditating. After 18 months, 72% had quit meditating. However, amongst patients, only 5% quit after three months, and after 36 months 58% quit. So we can have some courage about sharing a practice which we know from personal experience to be beneficial. People come to see us and they've got distress. The data suggests that our patients are more likely to continue with meditation practice.

I would also like to suggest two factors which correlate with positive psychotherapy outcome that may be the same for meditation. One factor is distress and the other is rapport. If somebody just learns meditation because they think, "Oh, that would be fun to do on a Friday night," they're less likely to continue. But if there is substantial distress and an ongoing rapport with a teacher or fellow meditators, I think the likelihood that a person will continue meditation and benefit from it is great.

One question we might ask is, "What kind of person takes to meditation?" What we've found, amongst other things, is that people who are what Delmonte calls "repressed/extraverted types" are more likely to continue. "Repressed" means they "are able to repress what comes up in meditation when they leave the cushion." "Extraverted" means they can "engage in an extraverted way." People who quit may include those who, if they get retraumatized in meditation, can't forget it when they walk out the door.

Walsh showed in studies with Transcendental Meditation that people who continue in meditation are interested in internal experience and open to unusual experience (I suppose this is intuitively obvious). Also, people who

feel they have strong self-control, are less emotionally labile, and who acknowledge personal flaws are more likely to continue.

Participant: What you seem to be describing as a person well suited for meditation is a person with good ego strength.

Chris: That's correct. One of the challenges teachers need to pay attention to is whether, when meditation gets difficult, a person is experiencing ego fragmentation or is merely passing through a negative mind-state. It's a key distinction, and you really have to know the person in order to answer that question. If a person keeps pressing on



as the ego is disintegrating, it can be very dangerous. And if a person quits just because they have some negative mind-state, but they've got a good foundation, they miss a breakthrough.

Perhaps you are familiar with how Jack Engler put it many years ago: "You have to be somebody before you can be nobody." He has actually backed away from that model in recent years, in part because it is quite linear. We are now more comfortable with a non-linear model, where we can develop attentional stability *and* can develop a sense of self as we pass through negative mind-states. In other words, we can in a way do both, which opens the field somewhat to the types of people we can help with mindfulness practice.

But again, if we're going to teach

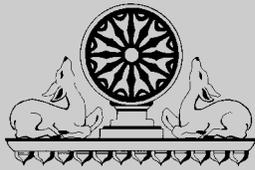
meditation to people who have weak ego strength, we need to be very careful about any kind of ego fragmentation. One of the questions often raised is, "What are the clinical indications for meditation, and when do we present it?"

In fact there are many clinical indications for meditation as an autonomic, self-regulation technique. Meditation for stress management can be written with impunity on managed care forms; managed care likes it! There is a long list of empirically-validated clinical indications for meditation: anxiety, panic, ruminative depression, insomnia, pain, infertility, asthma, migraine headaches, diabetes, hypertension, substance abuse, anger management...The National Institute of Health, back in 1988, sent a memorandum to insurance companies around the country saying they should reimburse the teaching of meditation for insomnia and pain.

Participant: Is it appropriate to teach our clients meditation ourselves, or should we send them to someone else for that?

Chris: You just have to pay attention to the transference. You don't want to ruin the therapy or ruin the meditation because of transference issues. For example, if the meditation has problems and the client is trying to be a "good client," then the difficulties may not be reported and the meditation experience will suffer. Conversely, if the client is mad at the therapist for some reason, she or he may quit practicing meditation in defiance. Generally speaking, I like people to learn meditation outside, because then they have a holding environment where they can continue meditating long after therapy is over.

Participant: There is a hospital affiliated with my practice that has a wellness program, and they offer evening courses in all kinds of meditation. So I just direct people there. Such resources are becoming much more accessible in mainstream circles. 



Barre Center for Buddhist Studies

...for the integration of scholarly understanding and meditative insight...



The **Barre Center for Buddhist Studies** is a non-profit educational organization dedicated to bringing together teachers, students, scholars and practitioners who are committed to exploring Buddhist thought and practice as a living tradition, faithful to its origins and lineage, yet adaptable and alive in the current world. The center's purpose is to provide a bridge between study and practice, between scholarly understanding and meditative insight. It encourages engagement with the tradition in a spirit of genuine inquiry and investigation.

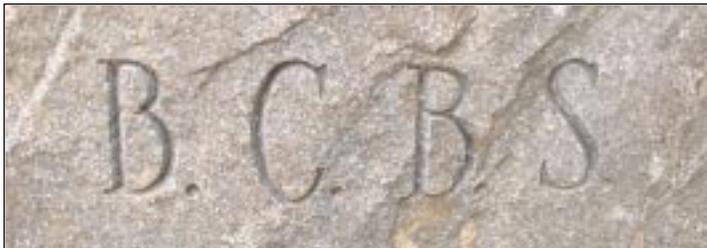
The study center offers a variety of study and research opportunities, lectures, classes, seminars, workshops, conferences, retreats and independent study programs. Emerging from the teaching tradition of IMS, the study center program is rooted in the classical Buddhist tradition of the earliest teachings and practices, but its vision calls for dialogue between different schools of Buddhism and discussions with other religious and scientific traditions. The emphasis is on the interrelationship between study and practice, and on exploring the relevance of classical teachings to contemporary life.



Located on 90 acres of wooded land in rural, central Massachusetts, just a half mile from the Insight Meditation Society (IMS), BCBS provides a peaceful and contemplative setting for the study and investigation of the Buddha's teachings. A 225-year-old farmhouse holds a library, offices and a dining room that provide a comfortable setting for students, staff and teachers. A dormitory and classroom/meditation hall provide space for classes, workshops and retreats, and three cottages provide secluded space for independent study.

The library at the study center is a major resource to be used by both students and visitors. Our collection consists of the complete Tipitaka in Pali (and, of course, in good English translations), several thousand volumes on Theravada, Tibetan and Zen Buddhism, and a variety of journals and newsletters. We continue to expand our collection and have something to offer both the serious scholar and the casual visitor. Some reference works must remain on site, but most books may be borrowed for up to a month at a time.

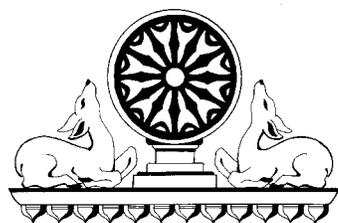




PROGRAMS

The study center in Barre offers a variety of programs from a wide range of visiting faculty, covering a diversity of topics of interest to students of the Buddhist tradition and of meditation practice. Most programs are one-day or weekend offerings, though some are for one week or two weeks. We can host about 20 people for the longer residential courses, 45 people for weekends, and up to about 90 people for one-day programs. Although not a degree-granting institution, many people can get academic and professional credits from their home institutions for programs attended at BCBS. Course offerings for the year 2003 are listed on the following pages, and registration information can be found on page 37.

The **Nālanda Program** offers a model for the serious and intensive academic study of Buddhism, such as one might undertake at a college or graduate school. Six to eight hours of daily classroom time is balanced by morning and evening meditation sessions, as well as informal time for discussion, reading or walking in the countryside. The intention of the Nalanda Program is to explore and engage with the sophisticated Buddhist tradition in ways that help us understand the context of the Buddha's teaching and its deeper meaning for our own lives and world.



The **Bhāvana Program** offers a new model for combining the benefits of meditation with insight into the teachings of the Buddhist tradition. Most of the day is spent in silent meditation, much like a classical vipassana retreat, but each day also includes a three-hour study period of issues complementary to the practice of meditation. The intention of the Bhavana Program is to direct our attention in skillful ways to the issues considered crucial to the cultivation of wisdom, and to allow the meditative time and space needed for these perspectives to penetrate and become meaningful.

The **Independent Study Program** is for experienced students who may be looking for a quiet place to investigate the Buddhist tradition on their own through the integration of study and practice. We welcome scholars to come and experience the benefits of a contemplative environment for their work, and we invite meditators to explore the benefits of the academic inquiry into the Buddhist tradition. Three small cottages have been built on the premises for this purpose, and other single rooms are also available. The program operates on a **dāna** basis, with no fixed fees for independent study.



The **Buddhist Psychology Program** investigates in depth the early Buddhist science of mind growing out of its profound contemplative practices, and explores the growing interface between Buddhist thought and modern psychology. Anchored by the 5-day *Essentials of Buddhist Psychology* course, offered twice a year, the program also offers a 5-day intensive study of advanced Buddhist psychology known as *Abhidhamma*, and a bi-annual meditation retreat and workshop specifically intended for psychologists and psychotherapists. Faculty from the *Institute for Meditation and Psychotherapy* contribute to the program, and CE credits are available for most mental health professionals.

BCBS TEACHERS

CORE FACULTY

ANDREW OLENDZKI, PH.D. was trained in Buddhist Studies at Lancaster University in England, as well as at Harvard and the University of Sri Lanka. The former executive director of IMS, he is currently the executive director of BCBS, and is editor of the *Insight Journal*.

MU SOENG is the director of BCBS. He trained in the Zen tradition and was a monk for eleven years. He is the author of *Heart Sutra: Ancient Buddhist Wisdom in the Light of Quantum Reality*; *Thousand Peaks: Korean Zen--Tradition and Teachers*; and *The Diamond Sutra: Transforming the Way We Perceive the World*.

VISITING FACULTY

GLORIA TARANIYA AMBROSIA has been offering reflections on Buddhist teachings and practices since 1990. She has been greatly inspired by the example and teachings of the western forest Sangha, the disciples of Ajahn Sumedho. She served as resident teacher at Insight Meditation Society in Barre from 1996 through 1999.

MATTHEW DANIELL has been teaching Buddhist theory and meditation to undergraduates at Tufts University for five years. He also teaches Yoga for Meditators at CIMC, and co-leads retreats at Kripalu and other centers.

JACK ENGLER teaches and supervises psychotherapy trainees at Harvard Medical School, and has a private psychotherapy practice in Cambridge, MA. He is a board member of the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies and is the co-author, among other books, of *Transformations of Consciousness* with Ken Wilber and Daniel Brown.

PAUL FLEISCHMAN, M.D. is a psychiatrist and a Teacher of vipassana meditation in the tradition of S.N. Goenka. He is the author, among other works, of *Cultivating Inner Peace* and *Karma and Chaos*.

REV. ISSHO FUJITA is the resident Zen priest at the Valley Zendo in Charlemont, MA. He has been trained in the Soto Zen tradition and has a degree in psychology from Japan. He also leads a meditation group at Smith College in Northampton, MA.

CHARLES GENOUD has been a practitioner of Tibetan Buddhism since 1970, and was a translator for the Ven. Geshe Rabten. He has also done many meditation retreats in India, Burma, and the US in the Theravada tradition. He has authored numerous books, including *La Non-histoire d'une Illusion*. He teaches Buddhist meditation and leads workshops in France, the US, England, and Switzerland.

JOSEPH GOLDSTEIN is a co-founder and guiding teacher of IMS. He has been teaching vipassana and metta retreats worldwide since 1974 and in 1989 helped establish BCBS. He is the author of *The Experience of Insight*, *Insight Meditation: The Practice of Freedom*, and *One Dharma*.

CHIP HARTRANFT is founding director of The Arlington Center, dedicated to the integration of yoga and dharma practice, and has taught a blend of yoga movement, breathwork, and mindfulness in the Boston area since 1978. Chip is the author of *The Yoga-Sutra Of Patañjali: A New Translation With Commentary*.



GREG KRAMER has taught vipassana meditation for more than 20 years. He is the director of Metta Foundation in Portland, OR, and teacher of Insight Dialogue meditation worldwide. He has studied, among others, with Ven. Ananda Maitreya and Ven. Punnaji Mahathera.

MICHAEL LIEBENSON GRADY has been practicing vipassana since 1973. He is a guiding teacher at the Cambridge Insight Meditation Center.

NARAYAN LIEBENSON GRADY is a guiding teacher at the Cambridge Insight Meditation Center where she has taught since 1985. She is the author of *When Singing, Just Sing: Life As Meditation*.

SUMI LOUNDON, 28, editor of the anthology *Blue Jean Buddha: Voices of Young Buddhists*, seeks to facilitate awareness of the dharma path among those in her generation. She recently received a master's from Harvard Divinity School with work in Buddhist Studies and Sanskrit.

BILL MORGAN, PSY.D. is in private practice in Cambridge and Braintree MA. Over the past 30 years he has done retreats in Vipassana, Zen and Tibetan Buddhist traditions. His doctoral project focused upon what it means to make progress in meditation. He has led weekend retreats since 1987.

SUSAN MORGAN, MSN, RN, CS is a clinical nurse specialist in private practice in Cambridge. She has meditated in both Buddhist and Christian traditions for the past 20 years.

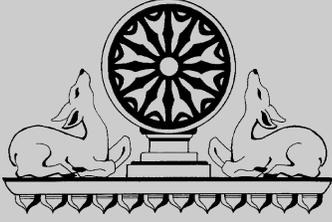
DAEJA NAPIER teaches vipassana and Brahma Vihara retreats nationally. Trained in Zen and vipassana traditions since 1974, she is the mother of 5 children.

JOSÉ LUIS REISSIG, "Associate Teacher" en la "Insight Meditation Society," practica la meditación desde hace veinte años, y la enseña desde hace más de diez. Previamente se dedicó a la biología, y fué profesor de esta disciplina en la Universidad de Buenos Aires—su ciudad natal—en la década del 60.

SHARON SALZBERG, a co-founder of IMS and BCBS, has practiced Buddhist meditation since 1970 and has been teaching worldwide since 1974. She is a guiding teacher at IMS and author of *Lovingkindness, A Heart As Wide As The World* and *Faith: Trusting Your Own Deepest Experience*.

TAITETSU UNNO is Jill Ker Conway professor emeritus of religious studies at Smith College, a scholar of Pure Land Buddhism, and a priest ordained in the Shin tradition. He is the author of *River of Fire, River of Water* and the forthcoming *Shin Buddhism: Bits of Rubble Turn Into Gold* (Doubleday).

LILA WHEELER practica la meditación desde 1977 y la enseña desde hace más de 10 años. Bajo el nombre de 'Kate' escribe ficción y hace periodismo, sobretodo sobre viajes. Se crió en Latinoamérica y regresa frecuentemente.



Barre Center for Buddhist Studies

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\$20 ___ Covers basic production expenses and allows us to send you two copies of the *Insight Journal* each year with no advertising and no fixed subscription rate.

\$50 ___ Significantly helps support the ongoing operation and all the programs offered at the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies.

\$100 ___ Substantially contributes to the growth and improvement of the study center by providing for capital expenses beyond the annual operating budget.

\$0 ___ If you would like to subscribe to the *Insight Journal* without making a membership contribution, the generosity of others will provide what is needed. Mendicants, monasteries and non-profit service organizations are particularly encouraged to request the *Insight Journal* as a free gift.

If you would like to speak directly with the executive director about making a more sustaining contribution to the endowment fund, to a major upcoming library expansion, or to discuss alternative ways of contributing, please feel free to send a message to andrew@dharma.org or telephone (978) 355-2347.

Registration:

- Copy or follow the form below; please use a separate page and check for each course.
- Send us the form and a **deposit check** by mail to hold your place in a course.
- Registrations are only confirmed when a deposit has been received.
- Please send deposit at least 10 days before course begins.
- The deposit is the full cost for one-day courses and half the cost for longer courses.
- Deposits are refundable in full (less a \$20 processing fee--which goes toward scholarships) if we are notified at least 6 weeks prior to the course opening.
- Half the deposit will be retained if canceling more than 2 weeks prior to the course opening.
- The entire deposit will be retained if canceling within the last 2 weeks.

Please do not let financial hardship prevent you from attending any of the offerings at BCBS. Work scholarships and disability scholarships are available to help supplement the course fees.

BCBS Registration Form

Name _____

Course Code _____

Address _____

Course Cost \$ _____

State/Zip _____ e-mail _____

Deposit Enclosed \$ _____

Home Phone () _____ Work Phone () _____

Can you offer a ride? YES / NO

Do you have any special dietary needs?

I have added \$ _____ to the deposit as a membership donation to help support the valuable on-going work of BCBS.

We cannot guarantee always meeting special needs, but call our cooks to discuss what is possible.



Barre Center for Buddhist Studies

COURSE SCHEDULE 2003

<p>May 18-23 (5 Days)</p>	<p>Essentials of Buddhist Psychology Andrew Olendzki, et. al.</p> <p>The core teachings of the Buddha are deeply rooted in the workings of the mind: how it operates in daily life, what causes contribute to happiness and unhappiness, and how techniques of mental development can purify and transform the mind. This workshop consists of a close reading of specifically selected Pali texts (in translation) which help illuminate the early Buddhist understanding of the mind, the senses, consciousness and the world of human experience. One of the aims of the workshop is to build a bridge between classical and contemporary perspectives on psychology. Includes visiting faculty from the <i>Institute for Meditation and Psychotherapy</i>. 28 CE units are available to psychology and other professionals.</p>	<p>03-PSYCH-1 \$400</p>
<p>May 31-Jun7 (7 Days)</p>	<p>Bhāvana Program: Saṃyojanā—The Ties That Bind Andrew Olendzki & Gloria Taraniya Ambrosia</p> <p>In the Buddhist teaching there are ten fetters that bind the mind to the cycle of rebirth. During this course we will explore the meaning of each of the ten fetters and learn how they are gradually overcome through the process of waking up. The five lower fetters are: self-identification view; skeptical doubt or uncertainty; grasping at rites and rituals, precepts and practices; sensual craving or passion; and ill-will or irritation. The five higher fetters are: craving or passion for fine-material existence; craving for immaterial existence; conceit; restlessness; and ignorance or unawareness. <i>See page 35 for a description of the Bhavana Program format.</i> Intended for advanced students--meditation experience required.</p>	<p>03-BHAV \$400</p>
<p>Jun 13-15 (Weekend)</p>	<p>Somatic Elements in Sitting Meditation Rev. Issho Fujita</p> <p>Sitting meditation is a whole-person activity involving not only the mind but also the body. The depth of mindful inquiry strongly depends upon the quality of balanced posture and natural breath. The purpose of this workshop is to deepen our understanding of the somatic aspects in the practice and to cultivate the embodied wakefulness and peacefulness. The lectures, meditations, and exercises in the workshop will throw light on topics such as uprightiness, body-mind integrity, alignment, centeredness, relaxation, physical fluidity, resilience, responsiveness, role of images, “good use” of bodily parts, total body integration, breathing, etc.</p>	<p>03-IF \$150</p>
<p>Jun 22-27 (5 Days)</p>	<p>Nālanda Program: Mahāyāna Studies Mu Soeng</p> <p>In this program we explore the basic themes of Mahayana Buddhism as they developed in India, and the range of teachings in the <i>Prajñāpāramitā</i>, the <i>Mādhyamika</i>, and the <i>Yogācāra</i> schools. The idea is to give course participants a thorough grounding in the Mahayana teachings in their homeland, and to explore the growth of Indian Buddhism in general. These teachings form</p>	<p>03-MAHA \$350</p>

the basis of later developments in China, Japan, Korea, and Tibet, among other places. We also examine the arrival of Buddhism in China and the transformation of Mahayana teachings there.

Jul 18-20
(Weekend)

Shin Buddhism: Bits of Rubble Turn Into Gold

Taitetsu Unno

03-TU \$150

The primary goal of Mahayana Buddhism is the transformation called “turning delusion into enlightenment.” We explore this transformation based on the teachings of Shinran (1173-1263), the founder of Shin Buddhism. The boundless compassion of the Buddha Amida, nonjudgmental and all-embracing, concretely manifested as the Primal Vow, focuses on imperfect, vulnerable and karma-bound beings (likened to bits of rubble) and transforms them into their opposite (gold).

July 25-27
(Weekend)

Meditation for Psychologists and Psychotherapists

Bill & Susan Morgan, with Paul Fulton

03-IMP-1 \$150

The value of meditation practice for counseling and mental health professionals is becoming ever more apparent. Meditation practice supports the cultivation of qualities of mind which are essential to all forms of therapy. This program is intended to provide an opportunity for learning—or deepening—meditation practice. An evening’s discussion is followed by a full day and night (36 hours) of silent practice—sitting and walking, and an opportunity for personal interviews. Sunday is devoted to a series of small and large group discussions of various issues arising for mental health professionals at the frontier of the interface between meditation and psychotherapy. **3 CE credits are available.**

Aug 8-10
(Weekend)

El Dharma en Español

Jose Reissig and Lila Wheeler

03-SPA \$150

Un curso tradicional de meditación Vipassana, que será también una exploración de cómo esta práctica puede entroncar con las vivencias culturales hispanas en las Américas — tanto a través del lenguaje (las partes verbales del curso serán totalmente en español) como a través del silencio. Además de los períodos de meditación sentada y caminando, se ofrecerán instrucciones, charlas y oportunidades para entrevistas individuales, y se crearán espacios para indagar y para compartir nuestras vivencias del Dharma. Exploraremos cómo nuestro idioma y cultura pueden ser portales para comprender las enseñanzas del Buda.

Aug 16-23
(7 Days)

Bhāvana program: In Nāgārjuna’s Footstep

Charles Genould

03-CG \$400

This week of meditation and inquiry will deal with two aspects of the Bodhisattva path: wisdom and compassion. We will use Nāgārjuna’s Verses From the Center for our inquiry into the practice of the gesture of awareness to see how various preconceptions shape and restrain our lives; how we perceive the world through the notions of efficiency, time and space, here, now, etc. The gesture of awareness challenges the notions of time in all myriad forms: improvement, usefulness, movement, and so on. The concern here is not with personal history but with the totality of one’s being. The practice of compassion will be based on Shāntideva’s Guide to the Bodhisattva’s Way of Life where we focus on the exchange of self for other to question the constructed reality of self as well as to develop compassion. See page 35 for a description of the Bhavana Program format.

Sep. 6
(Saturday)

Fear and Trust

Joseph Goldstein

03-JG \$60

In both meditation practice and our lives, we often come to the edge or boundary of what is comfortable, of what we can easily be with. The limits of our acceptance may reveal themselves in conditions of the body, in difficult emotions, in the imminence of death. At these boundaries, fear may arise as we face what is outside our more usual comfort zone. In this day of talks, discussion and meditation, we will explore the causes and nature of fear and how it might be transformed through our understanding into trust, confidence and wisdom.

Sep. 7-12
(5 Days)

Abhidhamma: Classical Buddhist Psychology

Andrew Olendzki

03-ABHI-2 \$375

Abhidhamma is the systematized psychological teaching of the Theravada tradition. Profound and far-reaching, the Abhidhamma literature is also renowned for its complexity and difficulty. Not for the faint-hearted, this workshop is intended for students with considerable exposure to Buddhist thought and/or experienced vipassana meditators. We work our way through the classical Abhidhamma textbook by Anuruddha, the *Abhidhammatha Sangaha*, translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi as *A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma*. An emphasis is placed upon the text’s contemporary relevance to practice.

Sep. 14
(Sunday)

Inner Freedom and Non-Reactivity

Narayan & Michael Liebenson Grady

03-LG \$60

In dharma practice we learn to respond with awareness and an open heart rather than habitually reacting with clinging or aversion. During this day-long workshop, we explore ways to cultivate equanimity and liberating wisdom when facing inner difficulties and challenging conditions that we meet in everyday life.

Sep 20-27
(7 Days)

Insight Dialogue: The Extra-ordinary and the Inter-personal

Greg Kramer

03-GK-2

\$450

Most meditation practices are done alone; most of our lives are lived with other people. At most retreats we practice being relaxed, centered and aware; in our relational lives we are often stressed and lost in a story. Even as we grow in meditation, “social suffering” thrives: separation from people we love, being with people who irritate us, unsatisfied needs for recognition and loneliness, and so on. How are we to bring the tranquility and mindfulness of explicit meditation to our interpersonal lives? This Insight Dialogue retreat introduces practices that facilitate letting go of interpersonal entanglements in the same way we got entangled, i.e., inter-personally. Without sacrificing the concentrated focus of extra-ordinary meditation, this retreat will interweave silent practice, metta practice, and listening and speaking meditation wherein we are regularly re-entered in stillness and presence. The focus of the retreat is always the Four Noble Truths, including the Eightfold Path.

Oct. 3-9
(6 Days)

Sublime States of Mind: Cultivating Mettā, Karunā, Muditā, and Upekkhā

Daeja Napier

03-DN-2

\$425

The four brahma viharas are practices prescribed the Buddha as antidotes for suffering. Cultivating metta (loving-kindness) counteracts anger and ill-will; karuna (compassion) provides the remedy for cruelty; mudita (appreciative joy) provides the curative for jealousy and envy; upekkha (equanimity) dissolves clinging and attachment. These “divine abidings” are the great healers of suffering inherent in our human condition. This forum/retreat will include time spent in noble silence, sitting and walking meditation, discussion, meetings with the teacher, and use of classical contemplative practices to cultivate these four wholesome qualities of heart and mind. Note: One day is allotted for each of the brahma viharas, beginning with metta on 10/4. Although preference will be given to those registering for the full course, one may register as a day student for one or more topics.

Oct 10-13
(3 Days)

Pātañjali and the Buddha: Awakening to the Yoga-Sūtra

Chip Hartranft & Andrew Olendzki

03-YS

\$225

The Yoga-Sutra of Patañjali, the defining expression of classical yoga, is a comprehensive and penetrating guide to awakening. Composed in the 2nd or 3rd century, it recasts the meditative yoga of the Buddha in terms of Samkhya, a philosophical school ascendant in Patañjali's day; yet it retains much of the practical flavor of the buddha-dhamma, which Patañjali knew well. The Yoga-Sutra takes the body to be the primary ground of contemplation, and is particularly helpful in its analysis of the way karmic formations give rise to physical and mental actions that perpetuate suffering. This course will explore the deep kinship between the yogas of Patañjali and the Buddha through sustained investigation of yogic movement and stillness, supported by a close reading of the Yoga-Sutra and selected Pali suttas. Text: *The Yoga-Sutra Of Patañjali: A New Translation With Commentary* (Shambhala, 2003).

Oct 18-24
(6 Days)

Bhāvana Program: Living Together in Harmony

Andrew Olendzki & Gloria Taraniya Ambrosia

03-BHAV-2

\$425

Most of us are familiar with the Buddha's basic guidelines for virtuous living—that is, the five precepts. But the teachings also offer precise guidelines for skillful and healthy communication, for resolving disagreements, and for giving and receiving feedback. In addition, the early discourses describe or outline what makes for happy people and point to how we ourselves can realize such happiness. In this course we examine several such texts and reflect on how we as human beings can use the practice and the teachings to more successfully live together in harmony. See page 35 for a description of the Bhavana Program format. **Intended for advanced students—meditation experience required.**

Oct 31-Nov 2
(Weekend)

Buddhist Poetry—The Embodiment Of Dhamma Experience

Paul Fleischman & Andrew Olendzki

03-PF

\$150

The tradition of expressing one's spiritual longings and breakthroughs in poetic forms goes back to the Buddha's own poetry, and that of his closest disciples. The tradition has continued through various lineages right up to the present time. In this workshop, we will read, listen to, and discuss classical poetry in Pali language, from the American Zen literature, and other miscellaneous sources. The format of the workshop will facilitate reading and sharing of poems by participants in ways that will allow the experience of Dhamma to resonate in beautiful and heart-felt language.

Nov 8
(Saturday)

Seeking the Seeker: A Direct Inquiry Into “Who Am I?”

Jack Engler

03-JE

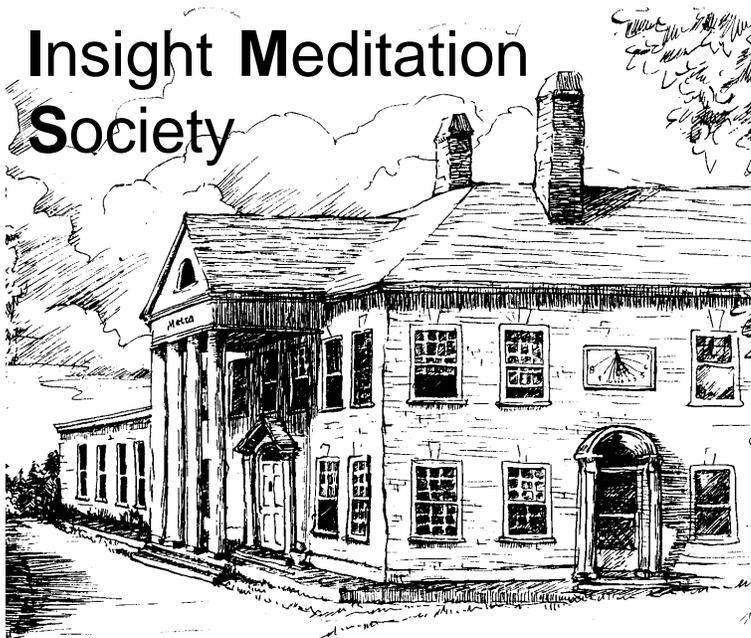
\$60

In Buddhist practice, there are three ‘doors’ to liberation: *anicca* (impermanence), *dukkha* (anguish), and *anattā* (non-self). A deep, direct encounter with any one of the three has the potential to end grasping and bring freedom. *Anattā* is often the most elusive, yet the most intimate and challenging to our normal sense of self. During this workshop, we use vipassana as a method of active investigation rather than passive witnessing to inquire into this self we take ourselves to be. The focus of the day is on learning to practice with this disturbing but ever-present question: Who am I? Who am ‘I’? There will be opportunity for questions and discussions as we work together to probe this question of questions.

Nov 9 (Sunday)	<p>Meditation: Tools for Awakening Courage, Faith and Compassion Sharon Salzberg 03-SS \$60</p> <p>This day-long program focuses on the practical tools that help us go beyond our constricting habitual patterns, such as fear and denial. Awakening the inner capacities we all have, meditation allows us to transform our worldview from one of isolation and confusion to one of connection, clarity and compassion. Especially in times of uncertainty, meditation opens us to a power of faith and courage based on seeing things just as they are. Suitable for both new and experienced meditators, the course consists of guided meditations, talks and time for questions and answers.</p>
Nov 14-16 (Weekend)	<p>Casteneda's Buddhism: A Buddhism-Shamanism Dialogue Mu Soeng 03-MS-1 \$150</p> <p>This workshop seeks to explore the common ground between the wisdom traditions of Buddhism and those embedded in the writings of Carlos Castaneda. The two are connected by yogic practices which both traditions see as prerequisite for training in wisdom. There has been a great deal of research interest among physicists and anthropologists in contemporary shamanism to explore models of perception and cognition that have significant overlap with what Buddhist models have to offer. This workshop focuses on inner spaces, world-views, and ways of knowing and being in these two traditions as alternatives to mechanistic world-views. The weekend includes periods of meditation and discussion for exploring new ways of perception and cognition.</p>
Nov 22 (Saturday)	<p>An Introduction to the Buddhist Tradition Andrew Olendzki & Mu Soeng 03-INTRO \$60</p> <p>This one-day program is intended for beginning students, as well as for those who have done some meditation practice and want to learn more about the Buddhist tradition. The first half of the day is devoted to looking at who the Buddha was, what issues he was addressing, and the basic outline of his teachings. The afternoon focuses upon the progressive development of the Buddhist doctrines and practices as the tradition moved from India into China and Japan. Both sections will give some attention to understanding the different forms of Buddhism that are manifest in our contemporary world.</p>
Nov 30-Dec 5 (5 Days)	<p>Essentials of Buddhist Psychology Andrew Olendzki, et. al. 03-PSYCH-2 \$375</p> <p>The core teachings of the Buddha are deeply rooted in the workings of the mind: how it operates in daily life, what causes contribute to happiness and unhappiness, and how techniques of mental development can purify and transform the mind. This workshop consists of a close reading of specifically selected Pali texts (in translation) which help illuminate the early Buddhist understanding of the mind, the senses, consciousness and the world of human experience. One of the aims of the workshop is to build a bridge between classical and contemporary perspectives on psychology. Includes visiting faculty from the Institute for Meditation and Psychotherapy. 28 CE units are available to psychology and other professionals.</p>
Dec. 12-14 (Weekend)	<p>The Great Way is Not Difficult: The Zen Poem of the Third Ancestor Mu Soeng 03-MS-2 \$150</p> <p>The poem <i>Hsin Shin Ming</i> (Trust in Mind), with its first line, "The Great Way is not difficult for those who have no preferences" is one of the most beloved poems of Zen as well as Chinese literary tradition. This weekend workshop explores the historical and doctrinal context of the poem, situating it within the teachings of the Buddha and Madhyamika philosophy, and also the interface between Buddhism and Taoism in China. Through classroom discussions and meditation periods, we gain a more nuanced understanding of this seminal text from the Zen tradition.</p>
Dec 19-21 (Weekend)	<p>Dharma for Young Adults: Integrating Body, Mind and Spirit (ages 18 to 24) Sumi Loundon and Matthew Daniell 03-YA \$150</p> <p>Leaving home and stepping into the world for college, work and travel, we young adults begin to confront life's questions on our own. What should I do with my life? How can I live meaningfully? How can I transform myself? How do I deal with powerful emotions, learning from mistakes, relating to my parents, having a serious relationship? This course introduces a profound tradition along with the powerful tool of meditation to begin addressing these questions. In addition to silent vipassana and metta practice, this course integrates body awareness through yoga, classroom study of Buddhist thought using Rupert Getzin's <i>The Foundations of Buddhism</i>, and peer support through small group discussions and social time. <i>If the cost of the course is an obstacle to attending, please get in touch with our office.</i></p>



Insight Meditation Society



The Insight Meditation Society was founded in 1975 as a nonprofit organization to provide an environment conducive to the practice of vipassana (insight) and metta (lovingkindness) meditation, and to preserve the essential Buddhist teachings of liberation.

IMS now operates two retreat facilities – the Retreat Center and The Forest Refuge, which are set on 160 secluded wooded acres in the quiet country of central Massachusetts.

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The Retreat Center:
(978) 355-4378
ims@dharma.org

The Forest Refuge:
(978) 355-2063
tfr@dharma.org



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2003 Retreat Center Schedule

Dates	Course Title	Teachers
May 17 – May 24	Metta Retreat	Sharon Salzberg, Kamala Masters & Susan O'Brien Larry Rosenberg with Woods Shoemaker, Doug Phillips & Matthew Daniell
May 31 – Jun 7	Vipassana & Viniyoga Retreat	
Jun 13 – Jun 20	Metta Retreat	} Steven Smith, Michele McDonald-Smith, Susan O'Brien & Rebecca Bradshaw
Jun 20 – Jun 29	Vipassana Retreat	
Jun 13 – Jun 29	Metta & Vipassana Retreat	
Jul 4 – Jul 8	Young Adult Retreat	
Jul 12 – Jul 20	Vipassana Retreat	Michele McDonald-Smith & Rebecca Bradshaw with Diana Winston, Ed Hauben & Marvin Belzer Christina Feldman, Fred von Allmen & Yanai Postelnik Bhante Gunaratana Trudy Goodman & Seth Castleman Narayan & Michael Liebenson Grady Ruth Denison Ruth Denison Joseph Goldstein (entire retreat) Steven Smith, Michele McDonald-Smith, Myoshin Kelley & Susan O'Brien Carol Wilson, Steve Armstrong, Kamala Masters & Guy Armstrong Sharon Salzberg & Susan O'Brien
Jul 25 – Jul 27	Dana Weekend	
Aug 4 – Aug 9	Family Retreat	
Aug 16 – Aug 23	Vipassana Retreat	
Aug 29 – Sep 1	Labor Day Weekend	
Aug 29 – Sep 7	Vipassana Retreat	
Sep 19 – Dec 12	Three Month Retreat	
Sep 19 – Oct 31	Part 1	
Oct 31 – Dec 12	Part 2	
Dec 28 – Jan 4	Vipassana Retreat	

2003/2004 Forest Refuge Teaching Schedule

2003		2004	
June 12 - July 11	Joseph Goldstein & Myoshin Kelley	Jan 1 – 31	Myoshin Kelley & Sharda Rogell
July 12 - 31	Myoshin Kelley & Carol Wilson	Feb 1 – Mar 31	Myoshin Kelley & Sarah Doering
Aug 1 - 14	Carol Wilson & Sarah Doering	Apr 1 – 30	Joseph Goldstein & Michele McDonald-Smith
Aug 15 - 19	Sarah Doering	May 1 – June 30	Joseph Goldstein & Myoshin Kelley
Aug 20 – 31	Sarah Doering & Joseph Goldstein	July 1 - 20	Sayadaw U Janaka
Sept 1 - 20	Joseph Goldstein & Marcia Rose	July 21 - 31	Myoshin Kelley
Sept 21 - Oct 31	Carol Wilson & Marcia Rose	Aug 1 – Sept 30	Ven. Ariya Nyani & Myoshin Kelley
Nov 1 - Dec 31	Myoshin Kelley & Sarah Doering	Oct 1 – 31	Christina Feldman & Myoshin Kelley
		Nov 1 – 30	Christina Feldman & Carol Wilson
		Dec 1 – 31	Carol Wilson & Sarah Doering

Please note that the teaching schedule may change without notice.

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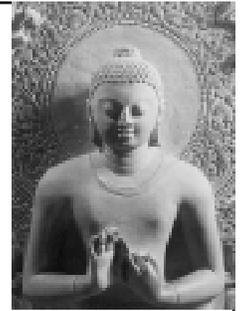
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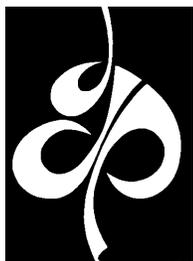
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CIMC is a non-residential urban center for the teaching and practice of insight meditation. CIMC's programs and facilities are designed to provide a strong foundation for daily practice. Our program includes daily sittings, weekly dharma talks, ongoing classes and practice groups, teacher interviews, and a variety of weekend meditation retreats.

An open invitation is extended to all to stop by CIMC and browse through the library or join in any of the public sittings or Wednesday evening dharma talks. A growing number of out-of-town yogis have enrolled in our weekend retreats and several members of our local sangha offer rooms to these yogis either for free or at a nominal charge.



Dhamma Dāna Publications is a publishing program, coordinated by the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies, which prints high-quality Dhamma books for free distribution. So far we have published six books that remain in print; other manuscripts are being prepared.

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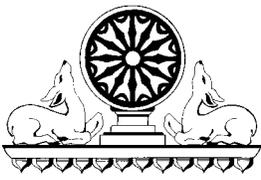
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These lovely verses are attributed to Tissa Kumāra, the youngest brother of King Ashoka, and if this is true it demonstrates how some of the poetry of the *Theragāthā* entered into the Pali Canon relatively late—at the time of the Third Council (c. 250 B.C.E.).

Prince Tissa was made Vice Regent when Ashoka was first consecrated King. But within only a few years, inspired by the example of a forest-dwelling monk he encountered while hunting, he renounced worldly life to live as a simple Buddhist monk in the wilderness.

His monastic name translates as The Elder Who Lives Alone. The poem exudes the romantic yearning for the solitude of nature felt by someone who grew up, no doubt, in the court of the Maurya empire. The first five stanzas are said to have been uttered to Ashoka while expressing his wish to become a monk, and the last two verses were composed upon ordination. A final verse, not translated here, attests to his eventual awakening.

It was quite a family. Ashoka's son (Mahinda) and daughter (Sanghamittā) were the ones to formally bring the Dhamma to the island of Lanka, where Theravāda Buddhism flourished for two and a half millennia.

The mountains named in the last stanza actually refer to the ring of hills surrounding Vulture's Peak, but since the previous stanza specifies the peak of a mountain, I think it is appropriate to name the more well-known site.

—A.Olencki

The Lonely Forest Dweller

Ekavihāriya Thera

Theragāthā 537-41; 544-5

purato pacchato vāpi
aparo ce na vijjati,
atīva phāsu bhavati
ekassa vasato vane.

If nobody is to be found,
In front of one or behind one,
That is exceedingly pleasant
For the lonely forest dweller.

handa eko gamissāmi
araññaṃ buddhavaṇṇitaṃ
phāsuṃ ekavihārissa
pahitattassa bhikkhuno.

So be it! I will go alone
To the forest, praised by Buddha;
For the self-resolute bhikkhu,
Dwelling alone, it is pleasant.

yogipitākaraṃ rammaṃ
mattakuñjarasevitaṃ
eko atthavasī khippaṃ
pavisissāmi kānanaṃ.

Pleasing, and joyful to sages,
Haunted by rutting elephants,
Seeking my goal alone, quickly
Will I go to the wild forest.

supupphite Sītavane
sītale girikandare
gattāni parisuñcivā
caṅkamaṃsāmi ekako.

In the well-flowered Cool Garden,
In a soothing mountain grotto,
Having annointed all my limbs,
I will walk back and forth, alone.

ekākiyo adutiyo
ramaṇiye mahāvane
kadāhaṃ viharissāmi
katakiacco anāsavo.

When indeed shall I come to dwell
All alone, without companion
In the great forest, so pleasing!
My task accomplished, without taint?

mālute upavāyante
sīte surabhogandhake
avijjaṃ dālayissāmi
nisinno nagamuḍḍhani.

While the gentle breezes flutter,
Soothing and laden with fragrance,
I'll burst asunder ignorance
While seated on the mountain top.

vane kusumasañchanne
pabbhāre nūna sītale
vimuttisukhena sukhitō
ramissāmi Giribboje.

In a grove covered with flowers,
Or maybe on a cool hillside,
Gladdened by the joy of release,
I'll be content on Vultures Peak.

